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THE ALLIANCE OF NATIONAL LIBERATORY
MOVEMENTS AND TRADE UNIONISM IN AFRICA

Before I deal with the North African Region on the question of alliance of workers' Organisations and National movements I would like first of all to mention two important events which have a direct bearing on this subject, namely, the holding of a Pan-African Congress and Pan-African Trade Union Congress.

In 1945 under the chairmanship of Dr DuBois a Pan-African conference was held in London. Its delegates of about two hundred were mostly drawn from the Trade Union leaders who had attended the World Federation of Trade Union conference. Amongst ~~some~~ ^{delegates} were men like the present Prime Minister of Gold Coast Dr. Nkrumah. In 1947 Pan-African Trade Union Conference was held in Dakar capital of Senegal (French West Africa). In this conference two leading figures in the trade union movement and in the liberatory movement Messrs JB Marks, Dan Plouffe and a certain Mr. Woolcott representing the T. U. C. attended the conference. The importance of these events is the fact that the discussion of the Colonial oppression was linked with the workers' struggle and that an atmosphere of international solidarity had also begun. Since I have

have mentioned in passing the World Federation of Trade Unions, I suggest that the brief historical outline of the W.F.T.U and the International Trade Union right wing of the Western countries, should be dealt with in our next article before we deal with the African Region.

The North African Region consists of Egypt, ~~Lybia~~, Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. The ancient history of this region is of special interest to us, but that part of it can be left to the historians. ~~to deal with it.~~ It is interesting to note that in the biblical stories the Africans ~~are~~ ^{are} conspicuously interested in the story of Israel. ~~Moses when they oppressed by Egyptians makes King Pharaoh leading Jebachit~~ In the present day struggle I have often heard Africans likening Dr. Maitan with Pharaoh and one Luthuli with Moses. Whenever a child is named after Moses like Moses Kotane the parents usually visualize a time when that child shall lead his people from the yoke of oppression. This seems to be too true in the case of Moses Kotane.

In Egypt and Lybia the workers have not asserted their right to lead although Egypt has gone a long way in driving away imperialism and its agents like Farouk who was

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deposed a few years ago, yet the trade union movement and other democratic organisations are suppressed. The power is still in the hands of feudal lords. An internal bitter struggle is still being carried on.

When we speak of North Africa we generally refer to Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. The population of this region is well over twenty million, with the European population at about two million, a somewhat identical position to our in South Africa. ~~there is an upsurge of~~ At the present time there is a bitter, ^{bloody} struggle in North Africa against French imperialists and their local agents. Fortunately for the people of North Africa both in the liberatory and trade union movements the leadership is very much advanced. ~~They completely rejected the theory that the national struggle can be carried out independently of the workers. Nor do the trade unionists believe that there is such a thing as workers having nothing to do with~~

The people of Algeria, Morocco + Tunisia have challenged with determination the rule over them by French imperialists. The bloody revolution which is going ^{on} in this region is a result of accumulated grievances, dissatisfaction, which

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have been brought to the notice of the French rulers from time to time. The people have called off the hounds, the bribery of the rich and the middle classes who have been made to believe that the granting of votes to them makes them free and makes them Frenchmen. They are certainly not interested in being Frenchmen. They want to be Algerians, Moroccans or Tunisians; or they want to remain Moslems, Barbarians or Arabs. Their successful struggle has been made possible by the broad alliance of workers, peasants, the alliance of trade unions and the liberating movements. If you were to listen to Mr. S. Ariva of the W.F.T.U. describing the conditions in Morocco, not only of the workers but of the Moroccan people, when he says "thousands and thousands of agricultural workers small peasants ~~and~~ ^{racket} with hunger and poverty, having lost their land have come with their wives and children on an exodus to the town"; when he discusses chronic malnutrition. And when he describes the exploitation of the wealth of

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the country, ~~the provocation of~~
~~the workers~~ you would think
that he was describing conditions
in South Africa. Yet if you
were to listen to Mr. Lakhdar
Kaidi, Secretary of the General
Council of Algerian Unions describing
the conditions in Algeria you
would at first think that you
were listening to J. B. Marks
or Sibande describing the conditions
of the Rand Gold mines and the
Bethel farms. ~~but you will~~
~~be struck by more horrible~~
~~conditions, murder of and~~
~~execution of peasants~~

When he describes racial
discrimination and giving you
figures of millions of children out of
school, the suppression of peoples organizations
trade union movements. But as he goes
further to describe the military rule, the
throwing away of peoples in to camps
military courts, you will then realize that
struggle has reached a higher plane and
that the conditions are more horrible
than in South Africa. If you were
listen into his speech, you would think
that his agitating and inciting his country
man but you would be surprised that this
speech which reveals very bad conditions
in Algeria, is delivered in a trade union
conference.

One of the main tasks of leadership both in political and economic spheres is to give vigorous education to the oppressed and excited masses of our people about the inextricable interdependence of the political and the economic struggles. This fundamental truth emerges more sharply in all colonial and semi-colonial countries; wherein people suffer dual forms of oppression and exploitation, as workers as well as national groups.

My immediate task, however, is to deal with the national liberatory movement and trade unionism in Africa. A task, which cannot be dealt with exhaustively in these articles, nor am I the person for such an important subject, but ~~we~~ can endeavour to deal with the general situation, from time to time. In this article I shall start general broad outlines on the subject, and later deal with ~~it~~ ~~at~~ on regional basis.

Africa has a population of over a little more than two hundred million, and it is the only continent which is still entirely dominated by imperialist powers. Even our South Africa with its so-called independent status has within itself imperialist features, and indeed does practise imperialism. The South African Government is a partner to the exploitation of mineral resources of Africa and its indigenous people, with other imperialist countries such as U.S.A., Great Britain, France, Spain, Belgium and Portugal. The non-European workers are not only exploited as workers, but suffer national oppression as well, whilst European workers enjoy certain privileges which are denied to other sections. The effect of this has been to create a serious problem of dividing the working class on the colour basis. So as to lead the white workers for the defence of capitalist interest on the pretext of defending their own standards of living. That is how the workers in the imperialist countries are bluffed too. This ^{is} one of the reasons why the employer of labour deceitfully imported the slogan of 'no politics in trade unions'. The African workers are used as a cheap labour force in South Africa as in all colonial countries. The political and economic power in South Africa is concentrated in the hands of Europeans. This evil of imperialism in a country is further

shown by the Union Governments plan to extend its policy of white domination beyond the borders of the Union of South Africa e.g. the plan to incorporate the protectorates and South ~~Africa~~ West Africa

What then is the correct policy which we must follow in order to defeat our enemies? As already stated above, we have only one answer, and no other. The victory can only be won and imperialism uprooted by forging strong ties of alliance between the liberatory movement and the trade union movements, further by correcting any misconception that the trade unions have nothing to do with politics, similarly, the political leaders must know that the struggle of the people depends on the workers, and therefore it must be their duty to organise workers into trade union movements.

It would appear, however, that since the world War II, efforts along these lines in many parts of Africa have ~~not~~ to a limited extent towards building this alliance, especially in some of the France colonies and in some British colonies.

South Africa, although it is the most advanced industrial country in Africa has not yet built a true trade union movement based on the real principles of trade unionism, capable of advancing the interest of all workers and raising their standards of living irrespective of race or colour. The absence of a strong trade union movement has affected the development of the liberatory movement. All this is due to the superficial division of the South African society, on racial basis deliberately created to serve the interests of the ruling class, and weakens the movements of the oppressed people.

The coming into being recently of a real and true trade union movement in South Africa the South African Congress of Trade Unions which has people of all races in its governing bodies and which is itself led by people who are themselves in the forefront struggle in the liberatory movement, such as Leslie Massina and Peter Beyleveld, will no doubt be a desired alliance thus facilitate the downfall of the ruling class. On the other hand the African National Congress also in recent years added to its programme the

economic demands of one pound a day for all workers. This unfortunately has not been followed up by both the African National Congress and the trade union movements. The President-General of the African National Congress, Chief Luthuli, has ~~instructed~~ instructed Congress organs not only to go out and organise trade unions as part of their duties but also to give what assistance they can to those trade unions which are weak financially.

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THE ALLIANCE OF THE LIBERATORY AND TRADE UNION MOVEMENTS.

The North African region consists of Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. The ancient history of this part of Africa is of special interest to us, but that can best be left to historians. It is significant that the most interesting and well read biblical story is that of the oppression of the Israelites by King Pharaoh of Egypt and Moses's leadership in the struggle in Egypt. Even today I often here people liking "Allah" to Pharaoh and Moses to Butthuli. That is how Egypt is known to many of our people, but few know that is in Africa. Many in fact do not think Egypt is in this planet. Whether the story be true or not, is of no importance. What is important is the hatred of oppression aroused in the people by this story.

Although the struggle against imperialism in Egypt has in recent years been sharpened, and to some extent achieved some measure of success in driving the British imperialists out, the lack of solid alliance between the workers, peasant and the national movement has been set back in the achievement of full democratic rights. The leadership was and is in the hands of feudal lords or their agents, who are responsible for the banning of workers' movement and other democratic organisations. Hence the bitter internal struggle.

Libya in spite of its apparent independence status is in fact a colonial country with no strong liberatory movement.

When you speak of North Africa we generally refer to French colonies of Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. It is this region which has advanced leadership and is engaged in advanced forms of struggle.

The people of North Africa have decided to challenge with determination the authority of France to rule them in their land as if they their slaves and were not conscious of their rights. In this region of over twenty million indigenous people and about two million Europeans like in South Africa, there is at present a bitter and bloody struggle against French imperialism by the exploited millions of North Africans. All attempts to bribe and bluff the middle class and intelligentsia making them believe that they were French men have been exposed and have finally collapsed. The moderates, compromisers and imperialists agents have been swept aside. The people have directed their leaders and have decided to take the destiny of their country unto themselves. This has become possible because of the broad alliance which exists between the workers, peasants, intelligentsia and middle class.

If you were a South African and were listening to Mr Lakhdar Aaidi address in the 30th Congress of French General Confederation of Labour (C.G.T.) in these words: "Since November 1954 highly important events have taken place in our country. They are the outcome of the intense dissatisfaction of the people who see their demands systematically rejected and their longing for freedom spurned. They are the outcome of the growing anger of the Algerian people, oppressed, exploited and humiliated by the French colonists." If you were to listen to him describing the living conditions of his people, the exodus of peasants from country side to cities in search of work, the explanation that ninety percent of the people were illiterate and that out of a population of nine million only two million two hundred thousand of children of school going age do not attend school, when describing the conditions of mine workers and farm labourers, you would be sure that you were listening to J.B. Marks describing the conditions in the Rand Gold mines or that you were listening to Sibande describing the conditions of Bethal farm labourers. You would remember our brothers who lost their lives by the action of the police in the 1946 mine strike and many who have died in the Bethal farms and other places.

But when Mr Aaidi describes not only the intolerable racial discrimination, banning of people's liberatory movements or their trade unions, banned, deposed or exiled leaders, when he describes

the execution of peasants, the throwing of people into concentration camps, the military rule, the summary shooting of people, only then do you realise that you were in other lands - perhaps in Kenya.

Such is the situation in North Africa similar in many respects to the South African scene. There are of course differences, one of which is the fact that the struggle in this region has reached a higher phase than ours and that the standard of organisation in the trade unions and in the liberatory movements has created strong and solid opposition that has forced the rulers to negotiate.

Any body who maintained that these trade unions must only be concerned with economic demands or that the political demands have nothing in common with the workers' demands is either misled and therefore deserves special attention or is an agent of the rulers who must be treated with utter ~~xxxxx~~ contempt.

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