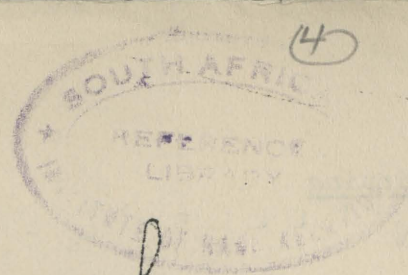


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SUPPLEMENT

in defence of

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THE

CONGRESS ALLIANCE

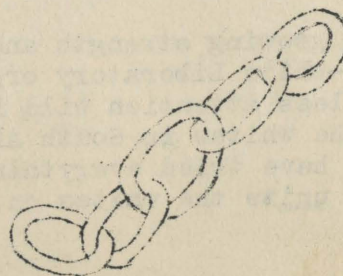
The formation of a single Congress has been proposed by a number of people recently, and two main arguments have been brought forward to justify such a step. Firstly, it is held that it is wrong to fight for a non-racial society with racial organisations. Secondly, it is held that practical organisational considerations require one single machinery rather than five as at present.

On the first point it must be admitted that the C.O.D. members would rather belong to a multi-racial organisation than remain in an organisation for whites only. Such an organisation would be more in keeping with the type of society we are working

for, and we would also be able to experience more directly the stimulation that contact with our non-white fellow Congressmen gives. The feeling of strength aroused by a thousand voices singing Nkosi Sikelele Afrika and the heights of solidarity and heroism that the African people have shown under pressure has bound many a white democrat closely to the movement for liberation.

In general, such experiences serve to confirm and reinforce the theories and abstract values that bring whites into the struggle.

Yet, despite this, white progressives(cont. on p. 2)



Continuing

IN DEFENCE OF THE CONGRESS ALLIANCE

decided to establish a separate organisation. The decision was taken in 1953 after the suggestion of the A.N.C. that white democrats could best contribute to the struggle by forming their own organisation and by working amongst the whites. That this is still the position today is confirmed by the interview we publish below.

The reasons for the views held by the A.N.C., and S.A.I.C. are set out in an interview, and have also been dealt with at length in the current issues of "Liberation" and "Fighting Talk" and need not be gone into here. Suffice it to say that an oppressed national group clearly has the right and even duty to form its own shield with which to defend itself. Coupled with this consideration, is the recognition that an organised body of white democrats can serve as a bridge over the colour bar, and concentrate on winning white support for the Congresses.

This is a specialised task in itself and there is in fact a danger that it might well be neglected in a single Congress where the problem of organising the oppressed would be paramount. It is probable that even if there were a merger, a special committee or even organisation would have to be created in order to cater for this special task. For example, past practice has shown us that you cannot use the same propaganda appeal for whites as for non-whites: you cannot use leaflets asking people not to take our reference books among white housewives; nor can you call on them to fight for £1 a day.

In addition, the problems facing each section of the population are different, and even with the loose Congress set up that exists, it is sometimes difficult to correlate a political campaign among the people. An example that comes to mind is the National Workers Conference, where in order to get maximum support for a single event different propaganda had to be printed for the African workers, Indian merchants and European democrats. This example illustrates the difficulties of co-ordinating and unifying the struggles of peoples who have differing disabilities.

In step with the growing strength and militancy of the non-white Liberatory organisations, more not less attention will have to be given to the whites in South Africa. The Nationalists have tried everything in their efforts to unite the whites on the

basis of fear for the Black Menace. Thus far they have failed partly because of the resistance of white democrats. But the need for more activity in this direction will become more pressing and C.O.D. with its ready access to whites is well suited to this task. Here again, if there was a single Congress - it's white members would doubtless be asked to specialise in this work in any case.

Why then should there be such a clamour for one Congress when there is so much work to be done among the whites? Is this not indirectly an act of writing off the whites as a political force? Is it not the act of despair of the newcomer into the political field who feels that he is an exception among whites, and has persuaded himself that a substantial number of whites will never be won over from being hard hearted oppressors? If this is even a part of the motivation in calling for a Congress merger then it is clearly wrong and dangerous as well. We simply cannot neglect to do all in our power to win over or at the least neutralise a substantial number of white people if we are serious in wanting change in this country. And, if we are convinced that a non-colour bar South Africa will be a happier place for all of us - white and non-white, then let us take our message to the former and win him to our point of view. After all, right, justice, decency, all the best human values are on our side.

However, whether we are in agreement with this view or not, we must nevertheless recognise that attempts to force a change of structure upon the Congress movement are fraught with danger. If instead of a modest, reasoned approach, barn storming campaigning at mass conferences is resorted to, not only will the move for a Congress merge be unsuccessful but ill-feeling will be created besides.

C.O.D. members would be ill-advised to urge a change that the whole Congress leadership has now expressly opposed.

B. T.