

B6

IN SEARCH OF NATIONAL UNITY

LYBON MABASA

Bw B6

A QUEST FOR TRUE SELF DETERMINATION

"AND THE PICKS IN OUR HANDS TURN INTO MALLETS OF JUSTICE

THEY MUST WIELD NEW POWER TO GUIDE THE TRUTH

AND LEAD THE WAY THROUGH TO LIGHT AND FREEDOM"

Comrades and friends I greet you all in the name of our revolutionary struggle and our beloved mother Azania. It is my belief comrades that the spirit of our gathering here reflects our sincerest desire to seek and foster National Unity of the oppressed. History has taught us that the most potent weapon the oppressed can use against their oppressors and exploiters is Unity. It therefore, becomes incumbent on us to seek and find the basis upon which this unity can be built.

Our struggle has been long and protracted. Along the way we have learned some lessons and it will be very disastrous and foolish of us to repeat the mistakes of yesterday. There are several factors that have adversely affected our struggle amongst which the following rank very high:-

1. Lack of sound priorities tailored to an objective revolutionary situation

We have failed to put our struggle into context. In our desire to internationalise our struggle we have failed to respond to issues of race and class obtaining in our own existential situation. Most of the time we have tried to explain away the horrors of racial oppression and capitalist exploitation existing in our society.

2. Structural and organisational forms that lagged far behind the context of the Azanian Revolution.

In each and every stage of our revolution there is a demand for certain "particular" structures and organisational forms and these, no matter how successful they are in a particular time, have to change to conform with developing society. When changes occur in society so should our methods. Organisational fixations will only delay our revolution. Fragmentation of our people leads to sectional and sectarian politics.

3. The prevalent ideological shortcomings and retrogressive methods and styles of work and organising.

There is no need to spend all our energies on trying to reconstruct yesterday when issues, at hand are of today and tomorrow. With pain in our hearts we have noticed the developments where the black community, through conditioning by the system, makes its well-considered resistance to fit with the system both in terms of the means and of the goals. We are witnessing the re-emergence of ethnicity on one hand and bantustans on the other, endorsing the system of apartheid. There is also an urgent need, in our search for unity to look into ideologies operating within our organisations and societies because in the final

analysis these will determine the road which we will ultimately have to follow. An ideology has aptly been defined as a system of ideas and beliefs on which social organisation and action are based. It is, therefore; a guide to political action. Broadly speaking, an ideology becomes a means to an end and not an end in itself; through an ideology we can determine who gets what, when and how. It is in the same vein that the thoughts and ideas of Karl Marx, V.I. Lenin, Mao-Tse-Tung, Franz Fanon etc are used as guides to social action. Guides can at times be partial or even irrelevant to a given situation, hence, for instance Lenin had to supplement Marx in the Russian context, Mao had to supplement both Lenin and Marx in the Chinese context. This confirms the statement that "ideology developps in the process of struggle! Regis Debres had this to say: "A Revolution cannot be exported or imported."

Another writer further described ideology for revolutionary imperialism as "the tendency in revolutionary circles for those that have led successful revolutions first to want to prescribe their 'guide' for revolutionary contexts elsewhere."

We have to take into cognisance that each and every society has its own major/primary contradictions and it is the synthesis of these which gives birth to an ideology. The pre-occupation with economic factors by some doctrinaire neo-Marxists in explaining the cause of white - black tensions in Azania and elsewhere, while quite appreciable and helpful at most serve to justify the ideological leadership of countries that are otherwise far removed from our African experience.

We believe that any ideology which will be acceptable to the masses has to be an ideology which "emerges from the people as a result of their aggregate experience in concrete economic, political, cultural, and socio-psychological terms". It is for this reason that we insist that the interests of the oppressed and exploited are best kept by the oppressed and exploited themselves and within the confines of Azania itself and never from outside. It should originate and find its inspiration from concrete contradictions within our country. We should be protectors of our interests. We are our own Liberators. "We have to guard against imperialism. It uses seductive and altruistic concepts such as, CIVILISE! LIBERATE! Both mean COLONISE!" Our organisations involved in the Azanian Liberation struggle should guard against following religiously ideologies which have no material base in our own existential situation.

4. The Scourge of Reformist Platforms: Experience has taught us that increased verbalisation of black militant demands, miseries and complaints has much appeal in the oppressive and exploitative world, and hence this world is susceptible to making its leaders those who are the most vocal. This was the criteria used to choose "bantustan leaders" let us not fall into the trap of staging a performance for the media. Some black lions of the 60's are the puppet leaders of today.

5. Disunity within organisations and lack of a sound strategy based on an empirical and scientific analysis of the objective situation. Our own subject forces and the balance of forces between the opposing sides:-

Historically most of our organisations have gone through various splits and this gives rise to the need to understand correctly the nature of our struggle. We are faced with issues of power, class and race and the way we relate to these is of utmost importance. Racial oppression exists side by side with capitalist exploitation with all its imperialistic implications, and the two are directly responsible for the dispossession of the indigenous people of their land which was the source of their livelihood, and ultimately reducing them to the black working class ^{which} today is the vanguard of the Azanian revolutionary struggle.

Racial capitalism is maintained and sustained by the white middle class - petty bourgeoisie who are themselves aspirant capitalists and the "white working class" which is satisfied with the status quo and feel they have nothing in common with their counterparts i.e. the black working class. The latter remains the only politically viable class who can wage a committed and successful struggle. The "white working class" on the other hand remains a supportive class to the capitalists and because of the privileges they enjoy in having the franchise and job reservation has become even more conservative than the capitalists themselves.

All these things point to one thing: that is the unity of the oppressed. Unity should therefore be regarded as a prerequisite for all organisations and people involved in the Liberation movement. We should develop a healthy and positive respect amongst organisations. After all, there are more things of common interest, things which should bring us together than those which tear us apart. Our organisations should realise that it is the authentic grievances of the authentic people which brings about authentic organisations to work towards redressing them. Our attitudes towards our organisations cannot be determined by the outside world or just external factors, even the AOU has had to learn a bitter lesson in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and recently in Zimbabwe to mention but a few. The imperialistic press or even the international world cannot dictate to us about the significance of our organisations. Any such attempt should be regarded and dismissed as impractical and militating against the struggle as a whole.

Different organisations may exist in society but that does not mean that organisations in society cannot work together, jointly and severally, and especially on things which they agree. In our organisations magnanimity and cautious vigilance must always be the mark of leadership, because in political struggle there is the tendency by power aspirants to deliberately confuse issues of tactics and principles or just simply prostituting principles in tactics.

In a complex struggle such as ours it is necessary to identify "who the enemy is" and to understand his workings in our midst or ranks so that we may not find ourselves forced to

fight him on his own terms and within structures created by him.

We are at a time where the white minority regime want to broaden its base by recruiting from within the ranks of the oppressed and thus cause divisions and confusion within the ranks of the oppressed. The urgent nature of this crisis has tempted the oppressed in certain quarters to form danger^{ous} and opportunist political alliances of the workers, petty bourgeoisie, liberals and sheltered elements from the oppressor camp - in the hope of consolidating against the oppressors and exploiters. Such alliances seldom have a sound political content and at best they tend to blunt the anger and the militancy of the workers and they are counter-revolutionary. Our alliances should not be dictated to us by the system. It should come from the people, the toiling masses, themselves - not from the air conditioned offices in the cities or the posh mansions in the exclusive suburbs. Even though Unity is a sine qua non to our struggle we correctly reserve the right to scrutinise the conditions on which our unity is based. We should find out who the enemies of our struggles are. We mean the obvious and the less obvious ones - who should be the first to be flushed from our midst. It is a proven fact that it is the "less obvious enemies of the revolution who compromise and destroy the revolution". They are more dangerous than the secret police.

Unless we can consciously and conscientiously identify the enemy in our ranks, we are not going to ably perceive imperialism and effectively destroy it and its tentacles from our ranks. The first task of a true revolutionary is to identify the enemy closest to him, and this includes himself and his colleagues. In the name of unity, self-criticism and scrutiny both necessary and essential. Self interests must take a back seat.

The system of capitalism is conflict-prone and in our country the conflicts inherent within this economic system are worsened by legislature. We have been thrown into a real jungle where survival of the fittest is the order of the day. Judging from the manner in which various institutions of society articulate with one another we find conflict inherent in all of them. Competition is the rule. I should at this moment state that I do not however, suggest that conflict in itself is not in the order of life. It plays a very important and constructive role in the drama of man's life.

So often have tribal and racial barriers been imposed on our country that sometimes even our organisations find themselves tempted to use the same lines. One needs only to take a glance at so-called Coloured, Zulu, Swati's, Venda, Tswana and Indian "Political Organisations". The Liberation movement should examine again any move applauded by the oppressors even if the move is made by organisations which consider themselves progressive.

One can dare say even the church did not bring unity in our midst because of the artificial divisions that have come along with the church - the converted and the unconverted.

This therefore, implies that our churches, sporting fraternities, activists, teachers, workers and organisations must pay the price for closing the gaps that separate the nation.

It would be naive for forum delegate, participants, observers and the nation as a whole to entertain the view, that this National Forum can at one shake achieve unity for the oppressed and exploited Azanians. At best this forum should rise with renewed determination and dedication to foster black solidarity, group cohesion and unity within the liberation movement. This is the message which we must carry back to our constituencies allies, and the world at large. Unbridled and unprincipled alliances are not synonymous with unity

The quality of leadership in our organisations must have bearing on our unity. As much as we are aware that politics pre-supposes some form of power struggle but that in itself does not mean position-mongering. It is expected of leadership to bring about the unity of focus of all oppressed people of Azania - so that we can address with courage the issues that face us.

In conclusion I would like to impress upon this forum the words of the most respected African leaders and thinkers 'Amílcar Cabral in "Unity and Struggle".

"...For the struggle against the colonialist enemy, let all forces we can bring together come. But not blindly; We must know what is the position of each one in relation to the colonialists".

In unity we must strive forward towards

ONE PEOPLE ONE NATION

ONE PEOPLE ONE NATION

FORWARD TO A SOCIALIST, DEMOCRATIC ANTI-RACIAL AZANIA

(This paper was a joint effort of Lybon Mabasa, Tom Manthatha and Lebamang Sibidi)

Collection Number: AK2117

DELMAS TREASON TRIAL 1985 - 1989

PUBLISHER:

Publisher: **Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand**

Location: **Johannesburg**

©2012

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of the collection records and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

This document is part of a private collection deposited with Historical Papers at The University of the Witwatersrand.