



APDUSA VIEWS

MAY 1985



NEW UNITY MOVEMENT LAUNCHED!

INTRODUCTION

During December 1984 and April 1985, history was quietly made at two Conferences of organisations, including APDUSA (Natal) which had adopted the Unity Movement outlook. These events were not accompanied by pomp, fanfare and ceremony since such elements are more suited to show business than to the difficult and demanding task of laying the foundations of a National Organisation.

Those who attended the conferences were struck by the sober and serious tone adopted by delegates and observers. There was thorough analysis and lively debate on the national and international situations. The decision to form the NEW UNITY MOVEMENT was unanimous. Its structure is the federal form with unitary aspects.

Throughout the conferences the underlying theme was a strategy to build the organisation into an effective force capable of intervening meaningfully in events taking place in the country.

NON-EUROPEAN UNITY MOVEMENT (NEUM)

The New Unity Movement is the rightful successor of the NEUM which was formed in 1943. The NEUM itself was a product of the world-wide revolt of the oppressed and exploited during the war years. It was formed in response to the demands of those times. Its birth marked a sharp turning point in the history of the struggles of the Black people. It put forward a thinking which was both revolutionary and relevant. South Africa was never the same again.

The main ideas of the NEUM were:—

- (a) The concept of **EQUALITY** of all human beings and the rejection of concepts like “superior and inferior races”.
- (b) The principle of **NON-RACIALISM** and a merciless attack on racialism in all its forms.
- (c) The **UNITY** of the oppressed African, Coloured and Indian people.
- (d) The policy of **NON-COLLABORATION** which, amongst other things, meant the rejection of government-created dummy institutions designed for “inferior races”.
- (e) The **BOYCOTT** as a weapon of struggle.
- (f) A set of **MINIMUM** non-negotiable demands in the form of the Ten Point Programme as a basis for **UNITY**.

REACTION TO NEUM

Whilst the New **THINKING** put forward by the NEUM found ready acceptance by the people, there was strenuous opposition to it from leaders of other organisations. Those leaders, who were tied to the apron strings of the liberals and who were enslaved by their own backwardness and cowardice, used every trick in the trade to fight and undermine the **NEW THINKING**. They collaborated with the government and called it “tactics”; they practised racialism on the grounds that the people were “not ready” for unity; they dutifully took part in the government-created dummy bodies and called it “fighting from within”.

Needless to say that in their long record of betrayal, those leaders had the full backing and support of the powerful English Press which gave them publicity normally allocated to VIPs.

NEUM IDEAS WIN THE DAY

The battle for the minds of the oppressed people raged over the decades. Despite heavy odds, Unity Movement ideas steadily gained ground. By the mid-1960s, government repression made it impossible for the Unity Movement to function as a national body. Notwithstanding this, the ideas of the Unity Movement became dominant in the liberatory movement. Such, then, is the power of correct ideas.

Today, we can say with justifiable pride that those ideas formulated by the NEUM 42 years ago have become common currency amongst the oppressed. All sections of the Liberatory Movement are compelled to expound those ideas even though some pay only lip service to them.

NEW OFFENSIVE BY THE RULING CLASS

It is only in recent years that the ruling class has realised that no amount of terror and repression can snuff out the flame of liberty. With this realisation came a marked change in its strategy.

First there was the coup within the Nationalist Party which led to the humiliating eviction of B J Vorster and his cronies and the entry of the P W Botha wing as government. This was followed by the massive offensive launched to bribe the Black Capitalists (factory owners and landlords), the Black petty bourgeoisie (doctors, teachers, lawyers, shopkeepers, clerks, nurses, etc) and the Black skilled workers. That would explain the offer of the 99-year leases, ownership of location houses, trade union rights, abolition of job reservation, open trading zones, tri-cameral parliament, etc.

The offensive poses the greatest threat to the Liberatory Movement. Whereas bullets, batons and the sjambok forced people to unite, bribery must be seen as a powerful weapon to divide and rule. The aim is to drive a wedge between the better-off sections of the oppressed and the poor workers and peasants.

It is true that in the first round of the new offensive, the oppressed people have won a resounding victory. All that the ruling class gained were the rejects like Rajbansi, Hendrickse and their gangs of greedy sell-outs. But we would be foolish to conclude that the war has been won. We must brace ourselves for repeated waves of assaults. Where bribery fails, the bullets and the batons will take over to prepare the ground for yet more bribery.

