

UNITY MOVEMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA
POLITICAL TRIALS BEGIN

We have received information that 14 of the 30 members of the Unity Movement of South Africa who were detained last February in a nation-wide security police swoop are appearing on four charges under the Terrorism Act. The fourteen men are charged with seeking to overthrow Vorster's regime by force of arms and with foreign assistance. Some of the accused are also alleged to have incited at least 32 people to undergo military training and to have conspired with their organisation in Zambia to collect funds to finance the recruitment of volunteers in South Africa. It is also alleged that they assisted people to leave South Africa secretly and to evade the police. The men appeared briefly on the 16th June in the Pietermaritzburg Magistrate Court and the case was remanded to the 2nd August 1971.

At about the same time that they were preparing to charge these detainees, Mr. Benedict Nyakeni was forcibly removed from Lesotho to South Africa on the ground that he is a member of the Unity Movement. He is suspected of having vital information concerning the charges against the detainees. To our knowledge Mr. Nyakeni is a Lesotho citizen. Their action reveals the extent to which the South African racist regime will go to collect evidence against the detainees.

Blanket of Silence

At the time of the arrests of (the leadership) of the Unity Movement the racist regime did its best to keep the arrests secret. It was fully a fortnight after the detainees had disappeared before the world got to know about it. International publicity mounted by the Unity Movement forced the security police to acknowledge these arrests and to promise early trials. Five months later the trials were to open without any warning. During this whole period the detainees were kept in solitary confinement and subjected to all the refinements of terror and torture that the South African police had learnt from the OAS in Algeria.

It is known that at the time of the arrests the fear that haunted the hangmen of South Africa was that the impending trial could turn out to be a second Rivonia, with all the adverse international publicity that went with it. As things are now the interest of the world is focused on the coming trials. The International Commission of Jurists, for instance, had planned to send observers to what is expected to be a major political trial. It is to avoid this full glare of the world that no advance notice was given of the trial date.

The Struggle Continues

Meanwhile the struggle goes on in South Africa despite the pessimists and opportunists on the one hand and the fascists on the other. The former have convinced themselves that the racists' military machine is so powerful that it is impossible to challenge. They maintain that the struggle of the oppressed must be substituted by international pressures on the South African government. While the fascists shriek at the top of their voices in an attempt to convince the world that they have crushed all opposition to their regime and that life is tranquil.

As if to give the lie to all this spurious propaganda the resistance of the oppressed Black masses in South Africa continues to stiffen. Reports reach us of the constant harassment of

the members of the Unity Movement in both town and country, particularly in the Pondoland area as well as those in exile in the adjacent states. More important are the persistent reports of clashes between the peasantry and the police in different parts of the country. These are most ~~embarrassing~~ embarrassing to the establishment and its propagandists who are forever at pains to dub them as tribal clashes or faction fights over cattle stealing or over land claims.

Every Black man in South Africa knows that it is the government that has expropriated and continues to expropriate the land from the peasantry all over the "reserves" as part of their ~~campaign~~ campaign to drive the people off the land onto the white farms, the mines and industry as migrant labourers. For a long time now it has been known that cattle stealing was officially organised as part and parcel of stock limitation, which is itself designed to facilitate labour recruitment. When the Blacks take up arms to defend their land and cattle they do so in the full knowledge that their fight is against the government irrespective of who the immediate agents are, whether white or black. Everywhere throughout the country the people have reached the stage where there is a determination to meet violence with violence.

It is in the light of such a milieu that the persecution and the trials of the leadership and members of the Unity Movement must be seen.

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