

Towards unity

The New African

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THE NEW AFRICAN
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EVER SINCE *The New African* was started, in Cape Town close to four years ago, we have been asked "where we stand" in our opposition to the South African regime. The question has always seemed of great importance to those who have asked it, and we have had little difficulty in replying. Repeatedly, the policy of this journal has been made clear: we stand for radical change in South Africa. We aim, as a paper, to provoke and to present original ideas on how that change is to be brought about. And we expect to do so, not by producing some *deus ex machina*, but by including as many different ideas as we can, produced by those who seek, with us, to end white supremacy and replace it with a radical and democratic system.

This means that we are not tied to any one set of proposals, or to the programme of any political party of organisation — South African or otherwise. Indeed, part of the reason for our coming into being (and our continued existence) is the fact that no one body has produced a policy or a programme generally held to be comprehensive enough to win unquestioning support. That is why we see it as part of our function to carry articles — however much we may disagree with particular views expressed — reflecting the ideas and activities of both of the major South African radical opposition movements, as well as a host of individuals unconnected with them.

The New African does not, in fact, exist to support a particular party, but to promote those ideas which will successfully bring about a radical change in power in South Africa — from a minority to the majority. As such, its main concern is to move away from the old slogans, which were so often allowed to pass for serious thinking in the past. And its policy is to provide a means whereby constructive proposals for change can be made publicly and can be discussed, no matter what their origin.

OVER AND ABOVE our desire to contribute in this way to the creation of a dynamic and radical set of policies, we have always sought after something else: the achievement of a unified opposition to the regime of white supremacy. It would be unrealistic to suppose that this could be achieved overnight. The failure of the United Front has left scars that will take a while to heal, and there are very real problems — practical as well as political — that will have to be solved before any meaningful attempt at unity can be made again. But it must be made. Far too much energy, talent and resources are being wasted on duplication of activities; and the disunity has produced disillusionment among genuine supporters of the cause of South African freedom — among the member nations of the Organisation of African Unity no less than among well-wishers in Europe, the United States, Asia and Latin America. In the Republic itself the desperate situation of the now scattered members of the banned freedom movements makes the ending of this internecine cold war abroad even more necessary.

One thing is clear: those who share the desire to bring about a democratic system in South Africa cannot afford to maintain, on this issue, the negative stance of the past. The character of the South African opposition has always been centrifugal, with one or other section rushing away at high speed from the centres of agreement, and the principles they share in opposing what is being done by those in power.

If by remaining unallied to one section or another *The New African* can help to reverse this trend, it will have achieved more than it ever could as a mere mouthpiece.