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INTRODUCTION.

Any serious analysis during a particular period needs to be judged in the context of situations pertaining at that period of time. This is true of a situation where there is an increase in conflict and fight for national liberation and that situation is true in the context of the South African and Southern African situation. Hence any study, particularly from activists needs to be analysed in terms of that situation before undertaking and printing a study of any nature. That does not mean that studies generally should not be encouraged no matter how bad, but in the context of South Africa it ought to be more guarded.

The Study of the Indian South African is an example of bad timing, ill-conceived and certain questionable conclusions arrived at in the context of the struggle and the role of the people of Indian origin played in that struggle. Hence the study does not assist the furthering of the struggle for the emancipation of the most oppressed majority which includes the other minorities such as the Coloureds and the people of Indian origin.

The Study does not mention the role the Indian Congress played in the National liberatory struggle particularly over the last 30 years. Neither does the paper grasp the resistance of the people of Indian origin from the late 19th Century onwards. It also fails to mention the names of Indian personalities and their contribution to the national liberatory struggle such as Naicker, Dadoo, Nair etc.

## 2 (a) CRITIQUE:

### Definition:

The Study itself starts off with the Declaration of Human Rights followed by the various population data of South Africa. It also includes a breakdown of statistics of the economically active persons by occupational group of Indian South Africans as defined in the pamphlet. The definition of Indian South Africans is questionable since all persons born in South Africa irrespective of race, colour or creed are South Africans. See the Freedom Charter adopted by the Congress of the People, Kliptown 1955 and re-affirmed when the External Mission of the National Liberatory movement, the ANC, opened its doors to all oppressed sectors of South Africa's population. A better definition for the purposes of any coherent study should identify the peoples as of Indian origin. Thus the meaning becomes much clearer in terms of South Africa.

2(b) The role of the Beagle of Indian origin and their contribution made to the struggle.

The people of Indian origin who, because of a different cultural background, appearance, looks etc are part of the oppressed majority, and have by and large always accepted - particularly in the last 30 years -and identified itself in the struggles against the White minority racist regime.

Because of the unique and intense colonial-type exploitation the coloniser and the colonised live in the same geographic area. Ruler and ruled live withingthe same boundary. The dividing line between the coloniser and the colonised is colour and race. Hence it is inevitable that the White racists would use laws and propaganda to divide the oppressed majority further and in South Africa in a more brutal inherent way. Therefor there are laws particularly designed for the Coloureds, the people of Indian origin and the Africans. (eg Group Areas Act, the Pass Laws etc)

South Africans of Indian origin came to Natal in 1860 as indentured labourers and were followed by the so-called "passenger Indians" and the reasons are well enunciated by the then Lt. Governor of Natal; "The introduction of a limited number of Coolies each year will render the colonialist less dependent than they now are on the Natives, and be lessening the competition will keep down the wages of the Kaffir". This was only one of a number of reasons why the people of Indian origin were brought in as indentured labourers. Another prime reason was that the local Africans refused to work for the White colonisers and the people of Indian origin were brought in to help the economic development of the White capitalist, colonialist classes.

From the very outset, according to the thesis by Dr. E. Pahad 'the Development of Indian Political Movement in South Africa 1924-46' 'Owing to the colonial heritage the anti-Indian attitudes of Europeans were deeply ingrained and found expression in statutory restrictions placed on the political, social and economic advancement of Indian people Therefor the attitude of the White settlers prompted the people of , Indian origin to fight the evils of oppression and form organisations. Whether the fight was for a limited objective is irrelevant, since limitations, as have been proved subsequently, are fruitless. The paper does not bring out that aspect of the role, influence and contribution of the

of the people of Indian origin to the struggle for National liberation. Instead the Study concludes on page 5

"that the extent to which this is understood and acted upon by them will effect their status in a South Africa ruled by the majority."

If they, the people of Indian origin, did not understand their own plight, why is it that the policy of Satyagraha was first tested in South Africa? Why was Ghandi forced to urge people of Indian origin to non-co-operation? was it not the reasons of subjugation and annihilation that prompted the people of Indian origin to form the Congress Movement when the Natal Indian Congress was formed in 1894 and the TBIA in 1903. The people of Indian origin has a long and bitter history of struggle first against the British colonisers and then against the White settler minority Government when the Union came into existence. All the policies and llws to cajole the people of Indian origin into submission failed, and then political pressures were applied, and schemes such as repatriation tried. These failed because of the resistance at the time. It must be noted, as in the case of the Africans, that the fight against the coloniser and white settler was first based on a local level before efforts were made to unify and educate the various localities. This was when the ANC was formed in 1912. In South Africa there was active co-operation between certain sectors of the progressive people of Indian origin and leaders of the indigenous African people. This can be traced back to around and before the 1920's.

When in July 1925 the arch exponent of apartheid, Malan, introduce the "Areas Reservation and Immigration and Registration (Further Provision) Bill" which was more damaging than the Class Areas Bill, a meeting was organised under the then moderate leadership of the NIC on 31st August 1925. One of the main speakers at the meeting was Rev. John L. Dube, a prominent leader of the ANC, who stated that the Africans knew what oppression was. A number of other ANC leaders 9% the period expressed similar views.

If the insinuations of the Study are to be correctly judged that the people of Indian origin has played a minimal role in the National Liberatory struggle, then how did the Xuma, Dadoo, Naicker pact come into existence? Why did the people of Indian origin join in during the mass demonstrations and 'stay at home' in 1950 organised by the ANC?

Why did the people of Indian origin volunteer and participate fully in the Defiance Campaign of 1952; and help to organise the Congress of the People in 1955 where the programme of the ANC was adopted? Is it not correct to point out that the people of Indian origin were arrested and detained with comrades from the other race groups in the famous Treason Trial of 1956? Why is it that during the Sharpewille shootings and subsequent stay-away campaigns the people of Indian origin participated fully? If an analysis on political prisoners is made the ratio per population of people of Indian origin favour comparably with that of other oppressed groups. Is it not true to say (though the Study does mention that individual people of Indian origin joined Umkhonto we Sizwe in their individual capacity but does not strongly state why the Indian Congress could not come out in support) that the people of Indian origin helped to form, formulate and fully participated in the activities of Umkhonto? It was because of the contribution and participation of the people of Indian origin, the Coloured people and White democrats from South Africa which prompted the ANC external Mission to throw its doors open to all the races in South Africa who believed in the policies and programme of the ANC.

#### 2(c) Repatriation.

The policy of repatriation failed because of the Satyagraha campaigns in 1904 and 1914 and the opposition to repatriation by the then leaders such as Gandhi. This point is not brought out strongly. Therefore the Union Parliament consisting of the White settler minority had to bring in other measures to restrict the movements of the people of Indian origin. Even financial inducements could not encourage repatriation. When the Nationalist Party revived the cry for repatriation in the 1948 elections, whether motivated by inherent historical prejudices or, as has been described in the Study, through economic necessity, the policy failed once again and was overwhelmingly rejected. The Study contends on page 8 that repatriation was through economic competition. This is highly questionable, since repatriation as a policy was always a ploy on the cards of the colonial exploiters as has been shown by Dr Pahad's thesis. It is also contended in the study that in 1948 "some of the leaders co-operated in the repatriation schemes." Again there is no substance in the allegation since the leadership and the spokesmen of

of thgaaniirg was in the hands of Dr Naicker and Dr Dadoo who were both i i opposed to any form of repatriation. If any so-called "leaders" collaborated in the repatriation scheme they were ignored. Because of the opposition to and the failure of the Nationalist racist Government to encourage repatriation they were compelled to introduce the Group Areas Act. Even that Act has not been wholly implemented because of the resistance of the people against it. The limited success of the Act was after the true spokesmen of the people of Indian origin were either imprisoned, banned or exiled. In fact its implementation was through coercion. The Group Areas Act was a further extension to subjugate the people of Indian origin in the economic, political and cultural life of the country.

#### 2(d) The Land ggestion.

The people of Indian origin have a long history of struggle but a paragraph in the Study stipulates after giving examples of various Bantustans

"In such an ideology the Indian South Africans presented no anomaly. They could be easily accommodated as one more nation in the series the apartheid system was creating and hence there was no reason to reject them."

Does this advocate that the people of Indian origin want an "Indianstan" within South Africa? If so then this view is extrieably opposed by the people of Indian origin and their spokesmen since their history is one of resistance and not submission. That paragraph is certainly not the view of the National liberatory movement, the ANC.

#### 2(e) Trade Unions.

The study sets out that Indian workers enjoy a measure of Trade Union protection. This might be true only in theory, but in practice no con- tedbrary person of Indian origin worker enjoys the right to organise Trade Unions; the right to negotiate wages, the right to secure permanent employment, the right to negotiate hours and conditions of employment. Even the right to strike is curtailed by a host of legislation, including the Internal Security Act, the Riotous Assembly Act, the Suppression of Communism Act. The essence of the South African society as dictated by the White racists in all spheres of life is to discriminate and play one against the other. Divide and Rule. This is also true in its industrial

relations policy. A typical example is the type of employment and the various wage differentials between workers. Only by replacement of the entire society can the mechanics of Industrial relations be altered.

### 3. The Future.

The fact of the matter is that the people have refused to register for elections of the Indian Council. This is absolute proof of their political understanding. To the extent that the South African Govt. had to introduce laws to compel registration. This shows the spirit of resistance and understanding of the situation in South Africa.

People of Indian origin have always opposed any form of subjugation of them and during the last 25 years have linked themselves with the National Liberation forces, ANC and have accepted the inevitability of an armed struggle. From its inception of Umkhonto we Sizwe people of Indian origin have joined Umkhonto we Sizwe. This is to get rid of the racist White minority government.

They have shown their resistance and solidarity with the African people in Natal and Transvaal.

Their attitude to the proposed new Constitution is regarded as a joke by the overwhelming people.

Indian activity must be looked at not only in the context of Government suppression but also in the light of the context of blackmail and threats of so-called leaders such as Buthelezi.

Solidarity of Indian workers in 1973 strikes show a deep understanding of the issues and also an indirect acceptance of the inevitable changes in South Africa.

Solidarity with African comrades was shown in October 1977 when 97 people were detained for holding a protest meeting in Lenasia.

Whatever fears they might have are planted by the government and puppet elements.

### 4. Doubts.

Perhaps the most damaging aspect of the Study is the following paragraph which speaks for itself:

"The factors inhibiting Indian participation hitherto have been decisive in the absence of a visible organised African resistance and a realisable prospect of change.

Whether the liberation movement is able to provide, any  
reluctance to participate, save one, among Indian  
South Africans will not arise from their position as an  
ethnic minority, but will be encompassed in the general  
problem of mobilising support."

It is correct to say that the Study questions the existence of the  
visible organised resistance. Yet in her biography she is "a member of:  
the banned African National Congress? Is it not a contradiction that the  
author is a member of the National Liberation movement yet questions its  
existence inside the country.

There were organisations working inside South Africa which were  
working in legality for a limited objective. Even those organisations,  
such as SASO, BPC etc have been proscribed.

S. Conclusions.

(a) This study seems to be geared towards confusing the issue confronting  
the oppressed majority.

(b) It is questioning and denigrating the role which the people of  
Indian origin has played.

(c) It is geared to get a sympathetic hearing for an oppressed minority  
within the oppressed majority thus creating more confusions and divisions

(d) The text of the Study is not in chronological order and needs close  
scrutiny because one point contradicts another then the other clarifies  
a second point.

(e) A study like this one by a "member of the ANC" and a well known mem-  
ber of the "President's Office" gives the impression that it is a  
paper approved by the national liberation movement, the ANC.

(f) Any members, under present circumstances, must be obliged to present  
such material to the movement before publication

(3) The Study should be seen in the context of the pertaining situation.  
The question regarding it should therefore be - what is its contribution  
(since it is done by an ANC member) to:-

(i) Furtherance of the political understanding of the Indian popula-  
tion and to the struggle of the Black majority in particular.

(ii) How will the international community interpret the paper (see this in the light of page 8 quotation.)

In other words any analysis on any subject in the present situation, must be approached from a deep political understanding and therefore necessitates a closer look by the movement of its present policy of giving a "free hand" to members in the pursuits for narrow individual aims.

The paper has been given wide publicity by the publishers for various good reasons. No such publicity has been given for any ANC publications. The reason for this is that there is a strong streak of dishonesty running through the whole paper eg although historical, no mention is made of any political personalities who have and are playing a very magnificent role in the politics and history of South Africa.

FINALLY: A glance at some of the other publications of the Minority Rights Group indicates a biased political attitude. For example:

- (a) Religious minorities in the Soviet Union
- (b) Eritrea and the southern Sudan
- (c) The Crimean tatars - Soviet treatment of National minorities
- (d) The Biharts in Bangladesh
- (e) India and the Nagas
- (f) The Montagnards of South Vietnam
- (g) The Kurds (Iraq)
- (h) The Untouchables of India
- (i) The Armenians.