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### MESSAGE FROM UGANDA

The blatant hypocrisy of many of those now pointing the finger of accusation with horror at events in Uganda must be evident to all Indian South Africans. Those who are responsible for racialism in our own country are those loudest in their sympathy for the Ugandans. We have been the victims of and have lived amongst a racialism of the most vicious kind for over a century. To suggest therefore that Uganda Asians might find sanctuary in South Africa is to ask them to jump from the frying pan into the fire.

Yet there are people in South Africa, and regrettably some Indians amongst them, who are deliberately exploiting the sufferings of the Uganda Asians for their own purposes. They are using events there to try and instill fear in our minds, and by suggesting that this is somehow a "natural" consequence of African majority rule are trying to alienate us from the African people. This is not a new tactic, but one used by oppressors everywhere. So fearful are our rulers of the united opposition of the Black people, that they will use every single trick in the book, and a few outside also, in order to divide us and so perpetuate their rule.

It is nonetheless important for us to understand the truth of what has happened in Uganda and why - so that we may learn the correct lessons and draw the right conclusions.

First and foremost we must disabuse ourselves of any belief that the Uganda expulsions are typical and an automatic consequence of Black rule. It was Britain which as the colonial ruling power used the Uganda Asians to help exploit the country's coffee, cotton and sugar for its own benefit and laid the foundations of the present problem. Regrettably the Asians were so tempted by the privileges that they were given, that they built further on these foundations.

As early as the 1940s some of our own leadership foresaw the inevitable consequences of such attitudes. They actively directed us in South Africa away from a similar position, and whenever occasion arose made their views known to the minorities in East Africa. In India Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru also repeatedly called upon Asians in Africa to identify with the African masses. In 1962 Yusuf Dadoo wrote :

"Whatever historical factors there may be for the position in which the Asian communities find themselves in East Africa today, the fact of the matter is that in the eyes of the African people they are looked upon as an "immigrant class" - a class of interlopers which is more of a hinderance than an ally in the national struggle for freedom and independence.

Time is certainly running out but it is yet not too late for them to meet the challenge of the times and fit into the new pattern of the African revolution. A new vision - a revolution in thinking and action - is what is required. A policy of appeasement will not work, an attitude of apathy will not do, a gesture of patronage and charity will not avail. What is required is to become true Africans in every sense of the word.

The Asian people of Kenya and Uganda, and indeed, everywhere in Africa have a responsible historical task to perform: that of being active participants in the struggle for national independence and freedom and in the achievement of the noble aim of building a mighty united democratic Africa."

But the attitudes of the majority of Asians in Uganda did not change. In the meanwhile the British having used the Asians discarded them and denied them the right to enter the country whose citizens they had become. Thus a situation was created which an opportunist and racist such as Amin has exploited.



What has happened in Uganda is "terrible, horrible, abominable and shameful". These are not our words, but those of an African President who has done so much to help bring about freedom in our country and who was Chairman of the OAU - President Kaunda of Zambia. President Nyerere of Tanzania referring to his own and African condemnation of apartheid has said of Uganda: "This is clearly racialism and representative of the same thing that Africans are deploring." Vice-president Moi has assured Asians there that they are welcome to stay so long as they are loyal to Kenya.

Unfortunately these statements do not receive the same attention in the South African press as those of President Amin, yet they do put Uganda into its correct perspective - as the exception rather than the rule in East and Central Africa.

In common with the majority of South Africans, in their everyday life and experience our people know the meaning of deprivation. They know what it is to be moved around, to be thrown out of houses, schools, temples, mosques and land; to work in the cane plantations, in the mines and factories at wages that are so low that 70% of Indian South African families live at or near the breadline; to have limited opportunities for education and restrictions on the use of such skills and talents we do have.

Since arrival in South Africa we have been part of the oppressed majority in our suffering. In time we came to realise that we had also to be part of the majority in our resistance and our efforts to bring change. With the emergence in the forties of the Nationalist bloc in the Transvaal and the Anti-Segregation Council in Natal various of our leaders have asked for and received support on the basis that we are a part of South Africa and must participate fully in the struggle to remove apartheid.

Thus Indian South Africans have taken their place together with all the other Black people. Dayabhai Saloojee and Timol are amongst those who have given their lives for their country; Kathrada, Nair, Naidoo and others have given their freedom and are on Robben Island and elsewhere with Mandela, Sisulu and thousands of our fellow South Africans. Today the NIC has once again forged links with representatives of other oppressed groups, the Black People's Convention speaks for African, Coloured and Indian South Africans and the students are united in their resistance to indoctrination, while the sportsmen are determined to play together. Our record hitherto can leave no doubt as to where we stand, and that is firmly on South African soil and steadfastly determined to free it from oppression and racialism.

In Uganda by contrast the Asians sought to be part of the ruling class. In colonial times they had economic privileges denied to the African majority and they asked for a special say in ruling the country as "Asians" not in common with all Ugandans.

As a result they accepted privileged positions in administering colonial rule. They control nearly 50% of Ugandan industry and 80-90% of the commercial life of the country. 50% of the registered doctors are of Asian origin as are the lawyers. They are also the majority of the skilled workers and artisans in the country.

We have seen in our own midst individuals who have been prepared to collaborate, support and even advocate apartheid in order to preserve their economic interests and receive the "honour" of talking with and being listened to by our rulers. In as much as the economic power of the Uganda Asians was so much greater, so too was their collaboration and identification with the ruling colonial power.

So convinced were they that they were part of the ruling colonial power that at independence the majority chose not to be Uganda citizens, by which action they showed they had no confidence in a basically African Ugandan government. But as collaborators inevitably discover, they can never be part of the rulers but merely their tools. And so having used the Asians and even given them citizenship in order to safeguard the white settlers, Britain rejected the Asians who chose to be her citizens and denied them the right to enter the U.K. In doing so she created a bottleneck and an artificial slowing down on a normal and natural process of citizens taking over jobs and opportunities in Uganda.

Democratic governments usually endeavour to ensure that foreigners do not



take jobs and opportunities from their own citizens. Our own government, not being democratically elected, prefers to bring in foreign white workers as immigrants rather than allow the Black people to take up the opportunities open. In India after independence citizens gradually took over jobs from the British. Similarly in African countries after independence citizens took over and the foreigners of whatever colour returned to their own countries.

British discrimination against its Asian citizens however, stopped this natural process and set up artificial tensions and pressures in Uganda, where even the Asian workers and less affluent were misguided enough to be drawn into a position where they saw the imperialist homeland as a sanctuary. Before the coup, President Obote when asked about the Asians said quite categorically: "Uganda has no Asian problem. There is a problem of 30,000 British citizens in my country." It is thus British racialism which must bear a heavy responsibility for the present situation.

For Indian South Africans the message from Uganda is quite clear: We must make sure that we do not in any way ally ourselves with the ruling minority. THOSE WHO COLLABORATE WITH APARTHEID ARE ENDANGERING OUR FUTURE IN A DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA AND MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO DO SO. It is a message the whites would do well to heed.

Far from being depressed we can take heart from the principled stand of Presidents Nyerere and Kaunda and draw closer still to the African and Coloured people. In a message to President Kaunda, Dr. Yusuf Dadoo has said:

"Your principled stand against racialism in Uganda and humanitarian concern for its victims has brought honour to our Continent and has given strength to the united voice of Africa against apartheid.

"South Africans of Indian origin who have been in Africa for over a century and who have long been united with our African brothers in the struggle to free our country gather strength from your words and renew their pledge to continue the fight for a free and democratic South Africa."

So let us respond as we have always done and associate ourselves firmly with the majority of South Africans. Just as we are part of the oppressed, we must more actively endeavour to be amongst those who fight against oppression, so that we will be an integral part of a free and democratic South Africa.

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#### SPORT : PLAY AS USUAL

The increasing momentum of campaigns against racist sport by Black people at home and by progressive forces abroad has brought many successes. Today white South Africa has been suspended or expelled from many of the major international sporting organisations. In fields such as rugby and cricket where her friends have managed to prevent her exclusion, massive protests and demonstrations have led to the disruption or cancellation of tours. This year at least two New Zealand Rugby players have refused to play against an all white South African team - Bob Burgess, one of the most outstanding of New Zealand Rugby players and Chris Laidlaw their former captain. With growing pressure from the New Zealand public the chances are that there will be no tour in 1973.

Even in those sports where White South Africa has found herself isolated, the battle is far from won. Faced with international ostracism white sportsmen and their associations are adopting new techniques designed to preserve racist sport at home, but by presenting a facade of non-racism to re-enter the international arena.

So-called "open international" events are staged, and Black sportsmen who are prepared to support apartheid allowed to participate. Members of bodies such as the Southern African Lawn Tennis Union who are not prepared to affiliate to the white union and by accepting second class status effectively endorse apartheid, are excluded. Thus our own Black tennis champion has not been able to play in these so-called "open international" events.

South African government and sporting propaganda has presented these events as a sign that "changes" were taking place, and will continue if only



white South African teams are allowed back on to international sports-fields. We can thus expect that more of these circuses will be organised and unfortunately some Black sportsmen will perform. The temptation for them may be great: a chance to measure themselves and gain recognition in international competition and a chance briefly to graze in the white man's green pastures. But let them be reminded that it is all of us who have to pay the price.

Those who allow themselves to participate in present conditions are allowing themselves to be used to perpetuate the status quo. Are there amongst us people who wish to be known as "sportsmen" and yet are so lacking in self-respect and dignity that they would allow themselves to be the tools whereby their fellow sportsmen are denied opportunities? These individuals must be shown that their participation does not affect or concern them only. It not only reflects on all of us but is also to the detriment of sport and sportsmen's own interests. For surely our aim is not that a few individuals occasionally enjoy these opportunities but that all those who wish to participate in sport, whether for leisure or competition, must have the best facilities. By accepting the crumbs from racist tables, these individuals are postponing the day when our national teams are truly representative of the best South Africans.

Fortunately, these Black sportsmen who become temporary whites are not reflecting the views and opinions of the majority of our people. Their position has been made quite clear by the support for the non-racial sporting institutions and the attitude to "sell out". The Protea rugby team who were used to try and safeguard white South African rugby, have been ostracised since their return; Basil D'Oliviera's abortive attempt to help organise a cricket tour in conjunction with Cowdrey met with such hostility from Black South Africans that he has been forced to change his mind. Black sportsmen and administrators who persist in doing the racialists' dirty work will find at home as well as abroad they will increasingly be subjected to ostracism and demonstrations of protest.

The reality is that nothing has changed. We still have to use inadequate and mediocre facilities, while the whites enjoy some of the best facilities in the world. Administrative, legal and police pressures have been used to force our people to accept the racial concept of white South Africa. The white associations have been trying to pressure us to join them as subservient "partners" so that they are able not only to control us but also to use the membership as a means of rehabilitation in the international field. In 1963 non-racial sports at the only enclosed ground in Transvaal, Natal, was stopped by a Supreme Court ruling. This year the Sam Kajee tournament was not allowed to be held there. The Lenasia Football Association previously affiliated to the white body, affiliated to the non-racial S.A. Soccer Federation, and consequently they were not allowed use of the Lenasia stadium. They have now been forced to rejoin the white body. The experience of Blue Bells is also an indictment of the sports situation in our country.

In every sport we have met obstacles rather than support from the white bodies. Our experience has shown that they are in general supporters of racialist sport. While it might be accepted that they act within the law, their pretensions are exposed when they support government policy even where the law does not require it. Apart from their history when they established the present racialist structure though the laws did not require it, even today mixed sport is not illegal in South Africa if the venue is private. White organisations have the facilities to arrange such matches, but they do not. Even their present policy of allowing affiliation in a subservient capacity has been forced upon them by the growing campaigns both at home and abroad.

In contrast the role played by many of the non-racial sports associations and administrators under very difficult conditions is a tribute to the spirit and courage of our people, and deserve the utmost support.

\*\*\*\*We must consolidate and strengthen the stand of the non-racial bodies.

\*\*\*\*We must intensify the boycott of racialist sporting events. Why should we subsidise our own deprivation?

\*\*\*\*We must bring about a dialogue with those sportsmen who have either misguidedly or willingly allowed themselves to be used by the apartheid sports associations. Those who persist nonetheless, must be left in no doubt how the people feel about them.

**SOUTH AFRICA MUST REPRESENT ALL ITS PEOPLE AND ALL THE PEOPLE MUST REPRESENT SOUTH AFRICA.** \* \* \* \* \*



### LESSONS FROM THE PAST

Whenever possible SEARCHLIGHT will publish articles which try to examine and analyse some aspects of our contribution to the development of a militant struggle for a democratic non-racial South Africa. Our intention is not to wallow in the glories of the past but rather to understand more fully the nature of our oppression and to benefit from past experience. To begin this series we have chosen the first passive resistance campaigns in our country organised and led by Mahatma Gandhi :

When Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi arrived in South Africa in May 1893, the Indian community was unorganised and sharply divided between the traders who often referred to themselves as "Arabs" in order to be distinguished from the indentured labourers "coolies".

Prior to the Boer War the British had taken up and used the grievances of the Indians in the Transvaal as levers in their conflict with the Afrikaner Republics over the status of the Uitlanders. With the defeat of the Boers the Indians had expected their position to improve. However the interest of the British had been primarily to allow British capital to freely exploit the wealth of the Rand, and having succeeded in this they proceeded to apply a policy no less discriminatory against the Indians.

Despite protests and a deputation to London led by Gandhi, the British Government gave its assent to Act 2 of 1907, whose effect was to compel the Indians to carry a "pass". The Indians had decided to resist this legislation. When to-day we can daily see the devastating effect of the pass laws on the African people, we can appreciate fully the far-sightedness of those who refused to submit.

A Passive Resistance Association was formed and launched the first campaign in refusing to obey the Act. It was a tremendous success and only 500 of a population of 1,300 registered and gave their fingerprints. As Resisters were arrested and imprisoned, but the campaign went on. As Transvaal Colonial Secretary, Smuts agreed to repeal the Act if the Indians registered voluntarily. But as he was to do repeatedly in the future, he treacherously broke the agreement, and the campaign was once more on.

By the time of the second campaign, the struggle and movement had acquired a broader base, and further laws were being opposed most notably the £3 poll tax imposed on all Indians indentured after 1895. Significantly the broadening of the issues brought Indian workers into the struggle and created a basis for the development of a genuine mass movement.

A batch of women Satyagrahis who had crossed the provincial borders without a permit but had not been arrested went on to Newcastle where they solicited support from the Indian mine workers. Two thousand workers struck and the employers retaliated by forcing them out of the compounds with their families. Faced with this immense problem, Gandhi and the other leaders decided to organise a march of the strikers and their families - 5,000 persons in all, into the Transvaal. The resisters received the fullest support from the community. At every stage local traders supplied them with food and water. After a gruelling march of 135 miles the resisters were arrested in Balfour and deported to Natal.

The coal mines dependent on Indian labour now faced closure. Smuts ever ready to defend the interests of the white capitalists turned the compounds into a goal and forced the workers to work as prison labourers. When they refused and were forcibly driven underground, spontaneously 60,000 Indian workers and agricultural labourers throughout Natal went on strike - the first general strike in the history of South Africa. The Government used force to try and coerce the workers into submission. In the ensuing clashes unarmed people were shot, maimed and a few killed.

Under pressure the government appointed the Solomon Commission which recommended that the Natal £3 tax be abolished and that Indian marriages be recognised as valid.



From these struggles we need learn four vital lessons :

1. The immense value of having a united organisation and militant fighters. We see also the power that comes when people support their organisations, leaders and resisters in the actions they take.
2. That despite a tyrannical government we are not helpless. This was shown again in February 1971 when 26,000 workers in Natal led by the Garment Workers' Union went on strike for a living wage and decent working conditions. Faced by the united strength of the workers the employers were compelled to cede their just demands.
3. The appeals by Gandhi to Britain and attempts to compromise and negotiate with the South African government proved futile. We know now that we can only succeed by relying on our own efforts not on outside forces, and we need to carry our efforts through to the end utilising whatever methods and means are available and necessary.
4. The reaction of the enemy to shoot and use force is an integral part of the white South African heritage. Just a few years before, in 1906, the Zulu nation had been massacred, and since then many occasions when peaceful demonstrators have been killed - Bullhoek and Sharpeville to name but two. If we are to succeed we must be prepared to face this violence and take account of it in our activities.

Now once more the Indian people are engaged in an effort to organise themselves, to give voice to their grievances and carry the fight to its successful conclusion. In this trying period of arrests, torture and police murder SEARCHLIGHT has no doubt that once again the people will respond to the call for militant action and genuine leaders who are prepared to sacrifice everything for the liberation of our country will emerge from the ranks of the people and lead them to freedom.

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\*\*\*\* SEARCHLIGHT invites comment and contributions. If your friends would like to receive SEARCHLIGHT regularly send us their names and addresses.

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