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b. Some Notes on the Call for a National Convention

INTRODUCTION

The UDF and its affiliates have just scored a huge victory. The apartheid regime put a lot of time and money into its 'New Deal', trying to convince South Africa and the world that apartheid was changing for the better. The huge, nationwide boycotts of the August elections, and the government's reactions (arrests, sjambokking, tear gas, baton charges) have sent the 'New Deal' into the dust bin of history.

Faced with this defeat we can expect more moves from the government. It will strike out with more arrests and bannings on the one hand. On the other it will come up with many more desperate 'new deals', offers of 'peace talks' on certain conditions, etc. In the face of these zig-zags, we have the duty to make sure we develop a clearer, long-term political understanding. We also have a duty to make sure that the many thousands of people we have reached in our campaigns also develop a clearer, political understanding.

We need to develop an understanding of how far we still have to go. We need to know what balance of forces is needed before we can draw up a real peoples' constitution so that, in the words of the Freedom Charter, The People Shall Govern.

It is in the light of all this that the discussion of a National Convention (NC) call has arisen in our ranks. How can we in UDF and organisations begin to set the political pace? Will we always just be reacting to the government's new recipes. Or can we begin to spell out our own political demands and preconditions?

To get a better understanding of these issues it will be useful to begin with a look at the history of the NC tradition in S.A.

THE HISTORY OF THE CALL FOR A NATIONAL CONVENTION 1908-1909 National Convention

The 1908-9 NC was held in Bloemfontein to draw up a constitution for the new state, the Union of South Africa. This NC involved English and Afrikaans speaking whites and the British colonial power. This NC completely excluded the black majority of this new country.

S.A. was born, then, on the basis of Britain handing over power to a small minority of whites, while the majority of our people remained racially oppressed.

The people take up the call for a new NC

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Within weeks of the plans for the new racist constitution being released in 1909, a number of small political organisations of Africans came together in a "South African Native Convention". The idea was to coordinate African protest. It was the first time ever that Africans began to organise on a national basis.

Out of this Convention, the ANC emerged three years later. One of its major aims was to unite all Africans in SA in protest against the illegitimacy of the new constitution. It was argued that all South Africans needed to be involved in the drawing up of a constitution. Unless all South Africans were so involved any constitution would be illegitimate. Over the years the ANC has demanded that there should be a new NC, involving all South Africans. This call has also come under discussion within other democratic organisations from time to time. Only such a NC could draw up a legitimate constitution.

The isolation of the white minority regime

At first most of the world did not listen to these views. Even up to the end of World War 2 (1945), SA's white racist regime was treated as a respected member of the international community. Later, things began to change. The socialist states grew stronger, most of Africa and Asia was liberated from colonialism. The democratic forces against apartheid grew more powerful, both inside and outside SA. Today the apartheid regime is an international embarrassment. Its right to represent the people of South Africa is seen as an illegal claim, and apartheid is seen as an international crime.

The 1961 call for a National Convention

The demand for a new, democratic, non-racial NC was made many times over the years by the people's organisations. This demand became particularly important in 1961 when, for the second time, a new constitution was drawn up for SA. This was the Nationalist Party's Republic constitution, which once again excluded the black majority.

At this time the ANC and PAC had just been banned. An All-in Conference was called in Pietermaritzburg at which the national liberation movement demanded the immediate calling of a NC. The NC had to be:

- i) sovereign - this means it would have the power to make any changes it decided upon, and it would not meet under the shadow of the guns of the racist police and army;

- ii) It was to be made up of elected representatives, with all adult South Africans, black and white, having the vote.

The All-In Conference warned the government that there would be a national general strike on 31 May 1961 if the demand for a NC was not met. On that date SA saw the biggest national stay-at-home there had ever been. SA's second racist constitution, the Republic constitution was deprived of all legitimacy.

Since 1961, various progressive, democratic organisations have frequently repeated the call for a sovereign NC. This demand has become a deeply entrenched part of SA's liberation tradition.

Attempts at right-wing co-option

Because of its importance within our tradition, it is not surprising that opportunists on the right and left have focused attention on the NC call.

Buthelezi, the PFP and certain imperialists in the US have sometimes tried to co-opt the demand for a NC. What these people want is not a sovereign, elected NC with non-negotiable preconditions. They want a get-together of 'leaders' to talk about SA's problems, while the apartheid army and police remain in place. They want us to believe that if only Buthelezi, Matanzima, van Zyl Slabbert and PW Botha (and sometimes they have the audacity to include Mandela on the list) could get together and understand each other, then SA's problems would be solved. Needless to say, this approach to the NC has always been rejected by popular organisations..

Ultra-left criticism

On the other hand certain ultra-left groupings, threatened by the popularity of the NC call, and more generally threatened by the growing re-emergence of support for the Freedom Charter, have tried to confuse people about the long tradition in calling for a people's NC. They have said that a NC would be a bourgeois sell-out. Unfortunately, many sincere democrats within the ranks of the UDF have allowed themselves to be confused by the ultra-left position. We will look more at this problem below.

NC and the 1984 Constitution

In the past few months now that a third constitution is being put into practice, there has been discussion of the NC call within the ranks of the UDF. While there is no commonly agreed, official position, those arguing for a NC call see it as being:

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- i) elected on the basis of unlimited, non-racial adult franchise;
 - ii) sovereign - ie, having the power to put into practice the constitution it draws up;
 - iii) public - ie, its meetings must be open to public observation, it is not a meeting behind closed doors.

There are also several NON-NEGOTIABLE PRECONDITIONS that would have to be met for such a NC to occur:

- i) The suspension and demobilisation of the police and army;
- ii) The unbanning of political organisations;
- iii) The freeing of all political prisoners, the unbanning of all those banned, the unconditional return of all those in exile. All of these people should be free to participate in the proceedings of the NC, and also in the preparation for such a NC;
- iv) The immediate suspension of all racist and unjust laws (like the pass laws, Group Areas, the Land Act, etc). The attempted revival of these laws will be made a punishable crime;
- v) The suspension of the current racist constitution, and the dissolution of the bantustans.

SOME QUESTIONS

The debate around the NC call has given rise to many questions. Here we attempt to answer some of these questions.

Wouldn't it be better to call for something else?

Some people argue that, since Buthelezi and the PFP have also called for a NC, we should make a different call.

It is true that we should not necessarily get stuck with a particular word, but at the same time we shouldn't just abandon our own traditions. The fact that the bourgeoisie talks about 'freedom' does not mean that we must now find another word. Opportunists will always try to co-opt popular slogans. If tomorrow the broad national liberation movement were to popularise the call for a 'Constituent Assembly' we could be sure that the Buthelezis would soon be making the call too.

We shouldn't get involved in a simple game of words, trying desperately to stay one step ahead of those who try to co-opt and water down our traditions. That is the approach of small, insignificant groupings whose 'revolutionary' activity consists in dreaming up fresh slogans, always 'one better' than anyone else.

If other elements also call for a NC we should use the opportunity to educate the broad masses about what exactly we mean by a NC. We don't need to be so insecure about our own strength. To

Take a related example, there is a long tradition within the national liberation movement of calling for 'One Person, One Vote'. Recently the Nationalist Party has said it is trying to do just that - give everyone a vote. Rather than changing our demand, we have been able to argue very successfully that a vote for an ethnic parliament, for a bantustan government, for a community council is worthless. Rather than abandoning our demand, we have used the state's initiatives on this front to politicise the broad masses. We have shown them the difference between our demand, and the government's policy which might sound the same.

But isn't the call for a NC a bourgeois demand?

The call for a NC is no more the property of the bourgeoisie than the word 'freedom'. It all depends what content we give it.

Far from being bourgeois, the content given to the NC (by progressive organizations) particularly the non-negotiable preconditions, are very far-reaching. The dissolution of the armed forces and the suspension of unjust laws would deal a heavy blow to the bourgeoisie in SA.

The fact that the words "NC" have been used by others is not a specific problem of this call. The same highjacking can occur with any set of words. Those who imagine, for instance, that the call for a Constituent Assembly is in itself more revolutionary than the call for an NC should note that the reactionary bandits in Mozambique, the MNR, are calling for a Constituent Assembly in that country. No set of words in themselves is waterproof. We would look to the traditions of our own struggle, and seek to develop these, educating and politicising our people around them.

Well, in that case, isn't the call for a Congress of the People a better demand than the call for a NC?

It is true that the Congress of the People, like the NC call, is part of our national liberation tradition. (This is not the case with the call for a Constituent Assembly, which means nothing to our people.)

The Congress of the People has sometimes been seen as a kind of NC. Certainly the 1955 Kliptown Congress of the People was the most democratic gathering there has ever been in SA.

But the Congress of the People occupies a different role within our tradition. The Kliptown Congress of the People was not a sovereign convention. It met, bravely, under the shadow of the

apartheid police. In fact, the police invaded the congress and put an early end to the gathering. The Congress of the People did not draw up a new constitution, it didn't have the power, and that was never seen as its purpose. The Congress of the People produced the Freedom Charter, an historic document of our peoples' demands for a free SA.

Why do we need a NC if we already have a programme, the Freedom Charter?

The task of a NC would not be to draw up a programme, but to draw up a constitution for a non-racial democratic SA. The Free Freedom Charter calls for the people to govern. A NC would be part of the mechanism for transferring power to the people, and entrenching that power in the spirit of the Freedom Charter.

Wouldn't a NC be another Lancaster House?

The question refers to the Lancaster House talks which involved Britain and the various parties in Zimbabwe. Many people feel that the settlement arrived at in these talks betrayed the struggle in Zimbabwe. It led to a situation where a black petty bourgeoisie took over the government from the white regime, leaving the majority of the people, workers and peasants still powerless.

The Lancaster House talks involved the leadership of all parties in Zimbabwe, including insignificant groupings like those associated with Muzorewa. The balance of forces was completely unfair. On the one side Britain, Rhodesia's Ian Smith and Muzorewa all combined against the ZAPU-ZANU Patriotic Front delegation. When it came to elections later Muzorewa could only get a tiny number of votes. The delegates to the Lancaster House talks, therefore, bear no resemblance to the kind of NC that is being demanded here.

Does the NC involve a '4 Nations' approach?

In the first place we should note that within the broad national movement in SA has sometimes been referred to as being made up of '4 national groups' - Africans, Coloureds, Indians and whites. But no one has ever spoken of 4 separate nations. The so-called 4 nations thesis is the figment of certain troublemakers' vivid imaginations.

Nevertheless, it is true that the elections for a NC sometimes has been portrayed as being by 'national group', with each group being represented proportionately according to its relative size.

However, this has not been the only way in which the NC has been seen. In particular, the 1961 All-in Conference called for an open, unqualified adult franchise for the NC.

Would the NC call be a campaign?

While this should not be ruled out for all time, it seems that this is very unlikely in the present. The call for a NC, with all its non-negotiable preconditions could rather be used to inform politically all our other campaigns. Our campaign against the structures of the new constitution can, for instance, involve outlining the mechanism for drawing up a legitimate constitution. Likewise our campaign for the release of our leaders and all political prisoners can be informed with the wider perspective of the preconditions for a NC.

Would a NC be a kind of parliament?

No. The NC is a temporary gathering designed to draw up a truly democratic constitution. Once this task is completed, it would dissolve.

Given the preconditions demanded, why bother with a NC?

This question is based on the misconception that the NC is designed as a round table negotiation with the present government and ruling classes. If the police and army are to be demobilized then a very different situation will have to be present in SA. In these circumstances the NC will be the gathering at which the constitutional form in which the people are to govern will be worked out. It is not a sit-down with the P.W. Bothas and Oppenheimers.

Internal Colonialism — a faded concept.

Progressives in South Africa have for many years debated about how best to explain the nature of oppression. We all know that there is political oppression and economic exploitation in South Africa. The question is how they fit together in our unique situation. This is not an academic question only, because different answers suggest different methods of struggle for a free society.

In the last issue of Social Review, the article 'National Democratic Struggle - a struggle against internal colonialism' expresses one view of the nature of oppression in South Africa. The article said that the nature of oppression in South Africa could be explained as a peculiar type of colonialism called 'internal colonialism' or 'colonialism of a special type'.

Let us summarise their argument. The conflict in South Africa is caused by the fact that it was colonised. Whites were the colonisers and blacks were colonised. As a result, national oppression exists in this country today. Whites are still the colonisers and blacks are the colonised nation.

'Colonialism' usually exists as a relationship between two separate countries. People of one country conquer the people of the other. The conquered people lose their independence. They remain controlled and oppressed by the conquerors. Colonialism means that the people of one country are ruled by the rulers of another country.

The people with the internal colonialism approach argue that a certain type of colonialism can exist within one country (not between separate countries). They say that in South Africa the whites are the colonisers (the colonial bloc) and blacks are the colonised bloc ('bloc' means group). In other words, blacks are oppressed as a nation by the white nation.

They argue, therefore, that the central struggle in South Africa is the black struggle for 'national liberation' (like the anti-colonial struggle in Africa). The aim of the struggle is national independence of the black people, and for democracy. The strategy of the struggle is to build a national unity of all classes of the (black) nation. The ideology of the struggle is African nationalism.

We argue in this article that internal colonialism, at

t, presents a partial picture of the South African struggle. worst it is misleading and the strategic conclusions are faulty. The South African situation is more complex than the internal colonialism (IC) approach suggests. The IC approach makes two basic mistakes. Firstly it looks at South Africa's situation but not at how the situation developed and how it stands today. Secondly it misunderstands the nature of colonialism and therefore wrongly applies the concept of colonialism to South Africa.

Why colonialism in Africa?

In spite of the fact that colonialism is a central concept in their approach, IC supporters do not discuss the meaning and nature of colonialism. Why did colonialism happen? The colonisation of Africa cannot be explained without understanding the motives behind colonisation. Historical evidence shows very clearly that basic economic considerations lay behind the colonisation of Africa.

By the late 19th century, capitalism was quite well developed in the major Western countries, particularly Britain, France, the United States of America and Germany. Many large factories had been built. However, there was an economic depression starting in the late 1870s which continued for many years. Capitalists were worried because their profits were getting smaller. They searched around for ways of increasing profits.

When trade began with Africa, capitalists in Europe realised that Africa might have great economic value to them. Africa could provide some cheap raw materials like cotton and palm oil (or soap and lubricating oil) - products produced by super-exploited Africans. In addition, some products made in Europe could be sold to Africans at high prices. A well-known example is mass-produced cotton cloth which was sold widely in Africa.

The act of capitalists exploiting the people of another country in order to increase their profits is called imperialism. This was this economic motive that was behind the interests of the capitalists of Europe in Africa.

Because of the depression, and for other reasons, competition among the capitalists in Western Europe increased in the 1870s and 1880s. Seven countries - France, Britain, Belgium, Italy, Germany, Portugal and Spain - all seized colonies in Africa to protect the economic interests of their capitalists. Africa was carved up to be shared as colonies by the European countries. Britain and France got the biggest shares.

First, with their superior military power, the European colonisers conquered the African people in different parts of the continent. Once conquest was completed, governors were sent to control the colonies on behalf of the conquerors. In some cases, European settlers were sent to run mines, farms or trading companies, or to work in the colonial administration.

As colonies, nations were politically controlled by the colonising power, based in another country. The colonised people had no say in the running of their land. Political and economic decisions were made by the colonial rulers.

Decolonisation in Africa

Africa remained colonised for about 80 years. Between 1957 and 1969 most of the colonies in Africa were granted independence. Some were already independent by 1957 (Ethiopia and South Africa). Others, such as Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Namibia were still to be liberated by 1969. But the central question remains. Why did European colonisers return most of Africa to political independence? One reason is that political independence did not mean economic independence, and even if African countries were free they would still be dependent. Therefore they could still be exploited.

But the reasons for decolonisation are complex. Firstly, there was pressure from Africa nationalists demanding their freedom. This pressure increased after World War 2, and in a few cases the struggle against colonialism led to violent clashes. In one or two countries armed national liberation struggles occurred. This was also happening in the Far East in Vietnam and Malaysia. Although armed struggle did not take place in most colonies, the colonists feared that it would eventually happen.

A second reason was the fact that the economic interests of the European countries in Africa had changed. Most important was the development of the multi-national corporation - companies like Ford, Shell, Nestlé and Lonrho. These huge companies are powerful not only because they control large amounts of finance (wealth), but because they control technology (knowledge about production). They are powerful enough to operate in foreign countries without the direct intervention of their home governments (although intervention, through the CIA, for example, does occur). The multi-national corporations can exploit without the protection of direct colonial controls. This is a new form of imperialism - imperialism without colonies.

For these reasons, and others, such as pressure from the

United Nations, it was politically advisable for the colonial powers to withdraw from Africa. It was also economically possible because of the changing nature of imperialism.

The Colonial State

The kind of government set up in the colonies during the colonial period varied, but there were certain common features. In some colonies there were colonial Governor Generals who ruled on behalf of the colonial power. In others there were Provincial Administrators. These colonial powers pretended that the colonies were merely provinces of the colonial country. What was true in all colonies was that democracy was absent. The people of the colony had no real say in the running of the country.

But the dictatorial colonial state could not rule by repression alone. This would have been very expensive as regards the cost of arms and armies. They had to get some collaboration from the colonised people.

That is why the colonial powers made concessions to some of the more powerful sections of the colonised people. Some were pulled into the colonial bureaucracy as chiefs or headmen (on colonial salaries), teachers or civil servants. To maintain their support, the colonial officials had to play a balancing act between the exploitative desires of the capitalists from the colonial powers and the demands of the local collaborators.

Most colonial states were also weak because they had a very small police force and army. The soldiers and police were mostly local Africans under the control of European officers.

It was a weakly rooted state apparatus. Its control lay in another country. Though it acted primarily to further the economic exploitation of the colonisers, this had to be balanced by some carefully judged concessions to parts of the local population.

Independence struggles

Economic development under colonialism was stunted. There was very little industrial development or large-scale farming. Therefore there were very low wage workers. Even in the more advanced colonies like Kenya or Ghana, by the time of independence more than 90% of the people were still on the land, mostly as small farmers. The working class was small and weak and the peasants (small farmers) were not well organised.

In many of the colonies, nationalist movements began to develop in opposition to colonialism. Not surprisingly, these

nationalist movements were led and organised by the educated Africans - the middle classes. Of course many peasants and workers also supported the movements, but they were not part of the nationalist organisations and they did not have a voice in them.

In countries where the Europeans granted independence before the struggle was very advanced, the African middle classes came to power very easily, and the life of the ordinary people hardly changed at all.

But where the struggle was harder, the middle classes were forced to look to the workers and peasants for support. There the nationalist movements incorporated demands for sharing the wealth and the land. In many such countries, after independence was won, the new government gave some benefits to the people. But many new governments forgot about the people. They were too busy helping the big multi-national companies get high profits. They were too busy setting up their own businesses and getting rich.

In countries like this (for example Kenya and Zimbabwe) the people still suffer from hunger, unemployment, low wages, little land and poor living conditions. (Colonisation has been defeated, yes; but the people are still exploited by imperialism in the form of the multi-national companies. And imperialism works together - very profitably - with the local African capitalist class which gained power at independence.

In some countries, such as Mozambique or Vietnam, however, the anti-colonial struggle was very different. There, the mobilisation and organisation of the people went very deep. At independence, the people truly won power; the land and the factories came into the hands of the people as a whole, and production was for the benefit of the people, not for local and foreign capitalists.

In countries like Vietnam, Mozambique and Cuba, the national liberation movements took up the struggle against imperialism and capitalism as well as against colonialism; whereas in countries like Kenya and Zimbabwe, the leaders thought that the struggle was over when colonialism was defeated.

In our analysis of colonialism we have shown that the political system of colonialism cannot be understood without looking at imperialism. We have shown that ending national oppression by gaining political independence is not enough; national independence on its own does not solve the problems of the people.

But the followers of IC are making this very mistake of looking only at national oppression. This causes two problems.

Firstly, it leads them to think that the situation of South Africa is the same as that of the other colonies in Africa. Secondly, their theory draws attention only to the political system of national oppression, not to capitalism and imperialism. As a result, their strategy is not designed to liberate South Africa's people completely.

Is South Africa a colonial society?

The IC approach says that colonialism in South Africa is different from the usual type of colonialism because it is internal colonialism. But IC does not analyse in more detail the ways that South African colonialism is different. Nor does IC tell us in what way the struggle in South Africa may be different from other anti-colonial struggles. In fact, IC stresses the similarity between our struggle and other anti-colonial struggles.

But if we look at the history of South Africa, we see that it is very different from other countries in Africa.

South Africa was first colonised 300 years ago. Over the first 200 years white settlers slowly arrived and pushed the inhabitants back, but little happened. Then, in the 1860s and 1880s, diamonds and gold were discovered. Capitalism rapidly developed in the form of mining companies.

South Africa had been a British colony since the early 1800s and many of the big mining companies were British-owned. Britain had big economic interests in SA, but was politically weakened by the opposition of the Boers who ruled the Transvaal. But in the Anglo-Boer War, the Boers were defeated and Britain set up a modern capitalist state that could serve the needs of the mines.

Local settler forces were strong in South Africa and made British control from the outside difficult. Britain granted independence to South Africa in 1910, when it accepted that local whites could be relied on to run the country in the interests of the mines. South Africa was no longer a colony.

However, national oppression remained for the African people in South Africa. Only a few members of the African elite had the vote in the Cape. Others had nothing.

After union in 1910, the British could not really prevent the emergence of a local capitalist class in South Africa amongst the whites. By 1948 it was clear that the national capitalist class had developed and consolidated its economic and political power. This class was mainly involved in farming and manufacturing, but increasingly in mining as well. This capitalist class operated with the (sometimes unwilling) co-operation

of imperialism.

The oppression of black South Africans continued. Up to 1910 this had been colonial oppression. Since 1910 the nature of oppression has changed. Africans are oppressed by an alliance of white capitalists and middle classes, supported by large sections of the white working class. This oppression was no longer colonial oppression, but oppression in the interests of South African (white-dominated) capitalism.

Since 1948, national oppression has taken the form of apartheid. Central features of apartheid - the pass laws - were designed to control the black working class. But at the same time as the SA government attempts to exclude Africans politically, it has drawn them in in ever greater numbers as workers, into the heart of the SA economy. The economic and political heart of SA society now lies in the cities. It is here that the power of the oppressed nation lies.

So, if we look closely at South African society, we see that it is very different indeed from classical colonialism.

Firstly, the South African state is firmly based on a ruling class inside South Africa. This state has been politically independent from Britain since 1910. The state is supported by large and powerful classes in South Africa. The police and army are recruited from the citizens of South Africa, fighting for 'their own country', not fighting in some distant colony.

Secondly, capitalism in South Africa is far more highly developed than in other colonial countries: there is a huge locally controlled mining industry; a powerful and sophisticated manufacturing sector; and a highly developed capitalist farming sector. The South African state has developed into a large and complex capitalist state in order to regulate all of these spheres of production, and in order to control the working class.

Thirdly, because of the high level of capitalist development in South Africa, there is a large working class with a long history of struggle and organisation. It is a working class far larger than that in any colony in Africa. In all the African colonies that became independent in the 1950s and 1960s, the working class was a tiny minority - less than 10% of the population in most. In South Africa the working class is the largest single class. This has great strategic importance.

Indeed, the South African class structure is generally quite different from that in colonial societies. If South Africa is a colonial situation, it is undoubtedly colonialism of a very special type; so special that the term 'colonial' ceases to have much meaning.

What does IC explain?

The IC approach tells us about the past. It describes the act of conquest of blacks by whites, and of black resistance. This history has marked our society and shaped the forms of struggle. IC draws attention to the depth of nationalist feeling; why people see the struggle in terms of national liberation. Nationalism is a central mobilising force in our society.

But the IC approach does no more than this. Most importantly, it cannot really explain the particular nature of South African society now. What can IC say about bantustan leaders, the Labour Party, rich black businessmen and community councillors? IC talks about sell-outs - all of these people? Why? What do these people have in common? The IC approach is unable to explain who are the friends and enemies of the people.

What does the IC approach say about who can be expected to support the struggle for full liberation and who will stop short? It tells us nothing. It talks about the black working class as the 'most consistent and dependent class' in the struggle 'against colonialism', but it does not say why. It also does not say why other classes might be less dependable, as it suggests.

What can the IC approach tell us about the struggles of the workers against the bosses? The struggles of the students in the schools? Community struggles against high rents? And if the IC cannot tell us about these things, how can it link them together, except in a superficial way? It does not explain the relationship between these struggles in the struggle for national liberation.

What kind of struggle is our struggle?

The history of colonialism in South Africa has resulted in the national oppression of South Africa's African, coloured and Indian people. Clearly this national oppression still exists. The oppressed people see their absolute lack of political power as the cause of all their other problems. As a result, national oppression is the major target of people's political anger.

This means that ours is a struggle for national liberation. Our understanding of colonialism has shown that national oppression resulted from the development of capitalism as imperialism. As capitalism has developed in South Africa, so national oppression has changed and been refined. Capitalism has maintained national oppression; it could adapt and find new ways to control

and exploit; and find new (black) class allies, as it has in Zimbabwe.

Therefore it is not enough to say we are simply fighting national oppression. If we want to solve the problems of the people - oppression, exploitation, unemployment, poverty - then we have to confront both capitalism and imperialism as well.

This applies particularly to the question of the state. We said earlier that the colonial state is a form of capitalist state - and that the South African state is a more highly developed and powerful capitalist state.

We cannot bring about deep transformation simply by giving everyone a voice in this state, that is by doing away with national oppression. One person one vote and black faces in a capitalist state can just give us a new class of oppressors - again, we need look no further than Zimbabwe for an example of this.

If we want real change in South Africa, we need a new kind of state - a state that gives real power to the people to change their lives; a state that serves the interests of the workers and their allies, rather than the imperialists and capitalists. And we need an idea and practice of politics that spreads right through the whole of society, rather than looking only at parliament and the vote.

In other words, we need to deepen the struggle for national liberation and take it further, so that it becomes a struggle for complete transformation of all of society. Such a struggle can be based only on the large and strategically powerful class located in the heart of capitalist society - the working class. IC tells us nothing about this, or how to go about achieving it.

How?

It follows from the above argument that the correct political strategy is to mobilise 'the nation' in a broad struggle for national liberation, while placing special emphasis on developing within the nation the forces for complete social transformation - which is to say, the working class and its close allies (the unemployed, the youth, the students, the poor peasants). We can point to three areas of work:

1. Organisation. It is very important to build grassroots organisations in the communities and factories. It is these organisations that build the power of the working people. It is in these organisations that democracy (that is control by the people) develops, and it is through them that working class leaders emerge. The grassroots organisations take the struggle

Conclusion

We have show that there are many important matters on which IC is unable to give us any guidance, and that is it therefore unable to show us the way forward.

We have argued that a proper understanding of imperialism and capitalism shows that, if our struggle is really to solve the needs of the people,

- 1) our aim must be for national liberation which transforms society top to bottom;
- 2) our strategy must be to build working class organisation, consciousness and leadership within a broad class alliance;
- 3) our ideology must be transformed so that it becomes, in fact, a socialist ideology embracing all the national aspirations and culture of our people.

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