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ZPC UNIT DISCUSSION PAPER:

THE CONFLICT WITHIN THE RULING CLASS

The fundamental driving force in the politics of any exploitative society is the antagonistic contradiction between the owners of the means of production and the exploited classes. Within the system of apartheid colonialism, the ruling class and its allies find themselves confronted with a whole array of classes and strata which stand to gain from the democratic revolution.

Black workers are at the head of the national democratic revolution - which is, in content, an anti-monopoly, anti-imperialist struggle.

In relation to these antagonisms, ruling class contradictions are mere quarrels within one family. Nevertheless they have a bearing on the development of our struggle. The movement in formulating strategy and tactics, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the enemy, has to identify the forces at play within the ruling class and find ways of deepening their contradictions.

For a revolution to succeed, all the classes must be "arrayed in such a way that all the classes that are hostile to us have become sufficiently entangled, are sufficiently at loggerheads with each other, have sufficiently weakened themselves in a struggle which is beyond their strength..." Conflicts within the ruling class are inevitable. Their root cause is the very exploitative system they maintain and the popular resistance to which it gives rise.

Contradictions within the ruling class do not, on their own, constitute a mature crisis of the ruling class. The contradictions should be the result of, A .

or trigger off, popular revolt. That is why revolutionaries should bring news of such conflicts to the people, explain their causes and urge the masses into action to defeat the enfeebled ruling class.

Today, apartheid colonialism is experiencing a general crisis. All the factors that are directed against it are converging and thus making it impossible for the system to extricate itself. Since 1976, the ruling class has experienced many tremors within, some of them quite serious; eg in 1976 when the generals planned a coup in protest against Vorster's approach to the political crises within the country and in relation to Southern Africa. Other conflicts such as the "Information Scandal" and the 1982 split in the Nationalist Party were partly the after-effects of this crisis.

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The "radical" bourgeoisie agreed with the general direction of Botha's reform policies. They were integrated into the state committees and commissions formulating the 'reform policies'. Such was the strength of the tendency of "unity at the top" that "consensus politics" became the ruling class catchphrase. -Even the PEP predicted a decade of realignment, with "integrationists" (MP, PET, etc) on the one side: and "separationists" (ENP, the newly formed Conservative Party, etc) on the other.

Big business supported "the strong government"; they sought to emphasise the sense of urgency with which the issue of change had to be addressed. Fortunately, total strategy in the broad sense, collapsed. The historical initiative is shifting into the hands of the people. The attempt to exercise political and ideological influence over the objects the colonial system has met with an organised and conscious force which is challenging the very legitimacy of the regime.

Differences within the ruling clique have not been eliminated. Panic within the white community is increasing especially since the encirclement of about 9000 racist soldiers in southern Inyanga.

Big business is therefore involved in a multi-angled campaign. Their apparent defiance of the regime when they went abroad to meet the ANC in Lusaka was also an attempt to placate South African and world opinion that they are at last distancing themselves from the ruling clique and are actively working for the dissolution of apartheid. Yes it should be seen as a form of pressure on Botha, so that he should act in the way they want; or at least an attempt to strengthen the leadership of the NP who share their views.

The crisis in the "middle ground" is dramatically demonstrated in developments in respect to the PEP. Faced with Botha's reform rhetoric which has wide appeal within its support base, PEP found itself trailing behind the regime, demanding "more" rather than introducing something "new". The emergence of a strong mass democratic movement like the UDF, JODAO, ECO, etc - resulted in steady demarcation between those who supported "reform" and those who called for a fundamental restructuring of society. The IFP was faced with differences among its members and else had to contend with the spectre of losing support to the "right" and to the "left".

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The 1984-87 mass upsurge: in our country, combined with armed struggle and international action, drove the ruling class into an unprecedented "organic" crisis. This crisis resulted in many soul searching by a wide range of political forces, from Gavin Hollis, Slabbert, Stellenbosch academics, Hirsch and Western Cape University, UPM Afr h.m: llers, Hynand Helen, NUSAS, etc. It is the role of the revolutionary 37:93 s that causes this soul searching. In 1986, the once strong South African rand was worth only 35 US cents, the stock exchange was closed and Gerhard de la Roubert went around the imperialist capitals arranging a suitable representation of dentso. The crisis had hit hard.

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The first and the most important effect of the eroding cohesion of the power bloc has been the growth of the risk:

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tidetien, The" :enerally banker after the "golden days" of apartheid and fear that even minor adjustments to the system will result in the undermining of their privileged position in it; in addition to these, the far right not only also draws support from certain categories of the Jnellsnse0"kl15 petty bourgeoisie. The emergence of a far right faction within Afrikaner nationalism had already been evident under Vorster. This on me with the breakaway of the Eestigte Nasionale Party in 1969.

With the coming to power of the Botha regime and the implementation of the "reformed apartheid" programme, the far right influence grew. Thus finally culminated in the breakaway of the 18 319s and the formation of the Konservatiewe Party (ICE) in 1982

The KP has now established itself as the major party political organisation of the far right. The HNP, although still drawing some support, is in decline; its bid for hegemony having been defeated by the KP. The EN? lost its only seat in Parliament in the May 1987 White-only election and is now facing defections to the KT, the next prominent being that of its former Secretary General and sole elected KP, Louis Stofberg. The KP, significantly, has recognised the potential support which it has among certain social categories in the English-speaking community. Unlike the :1. . it does not push on Afrikaner exclusivity and is? for example, committed to maintaining the existing official language policy.

The Afrikaner Herstaljiht ieging (AHB) led by Tugene Terre'Blanche has currently emerged as a 31411 :ztrerparliamentary force. The AHB has proved that it is able to mobilise large numbers of supporters at rallies, demonstrations and the like and has won several tests of strength when the NP has 1

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