

The State and the neo-liberal order

" It is a state that is represented by the alliance of the working class, the rural masses and the progressive sections of the middle class... and I say, when you leave here you should think about the nature of this state: the construction of the national democratic state grounded on the objectives of the national democratic revolution".

Cde Vice-Chairperson Blade Nzimande - SACP Public Meeting, 30th July 1996, Johannesburg, City Hall.

The intervention must be welcomed, because not only does it provide us opportunity to examine the current process of national democratic transformation, but the very theoretical tenets that underpin our approach to the NDR.

There exists discordance between the Movement's Strategy and Tactics of December 1994 and the domestic and world realities. This discordance poses a question of whether some of the theoretical postulates of the NDR are out of touch with society. This is not a statement of arrogance or theoretical abstracts that have nothing to do with concrete experience. On the contrary, the last two and half years experience of our struggle in the country and the global situation provide material for theoretically comprehending the meaning of the present tasks of the NDR in the current a global climate. We need critical re-examination of the theoretical positions which essentially 1) underestimate (if not turning a blind eye) the impact global, neo-liberal capitalism has on the dialectics of the national and international in the democratic transformation process (a problem Cde Joel partly acknowledged in the Is NDR on track?); 2) over-emphasize on state power in assuming the task of "advancement of the struggle towards the completion of the current phase of the democratic revolution, as opposed to establishing the fundamental unity of the State, the ANC-led Alliance and mass organization in carrying out the task of the national democratic project (RDP), 3) de-ideologisation" of the concept of national consensus and placing it above the nature of the state the NDR requires.

1) The dialectics national and international

The dialectics of the international and national is the key problem of the theory of any struggle for transformation, which handled when examining the anti-apartheid struggle but disappears when examining the present tasks of the NDR. The NDR suffers from comprehending this connection of as its premise. One passage in the strategy and tactics only warn us on the need to grasp this influence by "recognise the need for all humanity to contribute to the process of the

ample material

reconstruction and development of the underdeveloped and the developing, which recognises that the world is highly interdependent". This note emphasised as a task we must be assumed with " **a sense of delicate balance between national interests and the need to contribute to the making of our continent and the rest of the world a better place to live in**"¹.

In our conditions of governance, we are grappling with the difficulty the globalised economy is making on the relationship of the national and international in our struggle with the present.

The era of neo-liberal capitalism

This era is known as an era of neo-liberalism (after the classical, 19th century capitalism) whose practical record shows this is the right concept for it. Many marxist and non-marxists agree that many of the forms of the economic and social forms that have occurred in the in the South and North countries in the last two decades have followed the basic tendencies generated by neo-liberal capitalism. This is usually referred to as globalisation: The concept have have various interpretations but the SACP programme describe globalisation as " capital increasingly operating at a global scale, focussing on production for global (for export) rather than domestic market; making investment decisions across borders, seeking access to materials and cheap labour across the globe".

These basic features of this process have matured and are being repeated in many countries of the South and North.

They can be characterised as follows:

- 1) The erosion of the national capitalist states (through deregulation) , of the domestic market (through export led strategy), of the social spending, of environmental regulation (through monetarist austerity), of industrial laws and of wage agreements (through "labour market flexibilities").

This erosion of the national capitalist state is accompanied by increasing regulation at the international level through multilateral institutions. The national capitalist state is increasingly governed on behalf of small monopoly capital and our policies are increasingly determined by the multilateral institutions.

- 2) The indiscriminate opening of the domestic markets to the international capital and the free movement of goods and capitalists unfettered by national boundaries.

3) The working class and poor communities bear the brunt of intensified global competition as Capital strive to cheapen and seek cheap labour. This involves relocation of some production (runaway) to the third world countries where profits are maximised because of low wages and environmental controls. As we know, cheap labour means curtailment of workers rights. But some of these runaway plants are prohibited by their need to skilled labour, supplies, transport costs and backing from the powerful North countries.

The Globalisation of the world market, and the international division of labour along trading blocks (NAFTA, EAST ASIA, EU), The stiff competition of these blocs to each other and the pressure on weaker members to painful deregulations. So what we are experiencing is not cooperation among states but competition to each other.

The political, social and cultural consequences of these features is the reduction of social security, the drastic cuts in health care and education spending etc, and increasing marginalisation of peoples. The anarchy, and chaos that global capitalism is leading is beginning to receive some cracks as some of its architects are questioning its sustainability, the Mexico meltdown is regarded as the beginning of cracks in the blind of neo-liberalism.

In Mexico, the

But our analysis of global neo-liberal era will be meaningless unless we take into account the on-going global struggles (by social and political forces) against neo-liberalism. These post cold struggles, particularly the third world countries, caught up in the SAPs war struggles, manifest themselves in different forms. The role of South countries, particularly of national states (through Non-aligned movement, G77 and similar forums) has proved unworkable. This is because changes in the world's capitalist economy has spawned pockets of growth and profits in the South, leading to emergence of new grouping of states whose economic interests are incompatible with others - the Asian tigers, LDC, emerging markets and the so called second world in eastern Europe and former Soviet republics.

As more and more instruments of state regulation are shifting to multilateral institutions, such as WTO, IMF and World Bank, the South states. The struggles in these institutions are more fought by issue based, as opposed to political strategic, with no coherence. But the growth of struggles and enlarged, more dynamic linkages of these within and without, mostly by social movements. Presently, there are various efforts to strive to build powerful vehicles of world wide coherence. The common feature of the struggles is around the question of power, which made

itself known in various ways. The grasping of understanding global power as it relates to the state and economy and locating its centers is one pre-occupying many of these movements and it is an issue which we shall return later to it.

Features of the global struggles against neo-liberalism

"What is important is not just that the left is making a come-back, but also the MANNER in which it is making this come-back. The rebuilding of the left tends to be not in the shape of a single unique party, but rather in the midst of the broad left and popular fronts, in the midst of pluralistic politics", notes the SACP Statement.

It is very important to trace lines of development of international struggles (by political and social forces) in the new order.

- The headlong advance of the information technology has propelled the growth and diversification of international solidarity. Marginalised peoples from the rural regions of the globe can easily link with their counterparts who share concerns and aims. This has led to increased increasing participation in the world-wide struggles against neo-liberalism. The Zapatista rebellion is the perfect example in this regard.
- These struggles have an impact on the features and content of solidarity. More and more of these international vehicles are becoming global in character, catering to global movements: etc.
- There is also a growing development of ties between the left political movements/ and the social movements. These ties are now being extended at the international front, in such institutions as the UN, trading blocs, multilateral institutions etc. For example, parallel meetings are held by social movements in governmental meetings and intensive lobbying and interaction and feeding information are characteristic of these meetings. Quite recently, the RDP Council participated in the UNCTAD IX in Midrand. the environmental justice movement, 50 years is Enough, Third World Network such movements have a playing crucial role of monitoring the multinationals, and the operations of Capital on the marginalised communities.

The development of the international struggle is of practical importance of the relationship between the

international and the national in our transformation process. Experience shows the power and effectiveness of the international solidarity today among the working class and other democratic contingents. Particularly around anti-imperialist struggle must be enriched by this experience of this growing international movement.

But the current tasks of the national democratic struggle creates difficult conditions for determining the criteria and content of international solidarity², and in practicing its political and moral principles. The last decades have seen the growing tide of social and political experience against the dominant order. They are structured along bureaucratic lines, none hierarchical forms networks. The main activity, is centered around consultation, coordination, and joint action.

Consideration of the global parameters of correlation of forces, the crisis of global capitalism, is important strategy for our struggle for national democratic transformation. If we ignore this parameters we stand the danger of absolutising our national experience, and artificially rating this to universal experience. Undoubtedly our own struggle experience is a rich asset for developing theory of struggle and of building socialism. But our experience is part of the greater whole of the world wide anti imperialist forces in the world. If we contrast this an impression may be created that there is no neo-liberal global order, no radical change in the balance of forces.

The SACP Programme of 1998 warned us that if we don't establish the place of the NDR in the current globalised economy, "our NDR will be more than the recycling of "worthy but unrealisable ideas".

Clearly, based on the assessment of the global situation was struggle for national democratic transformation, is bound with the struggle against neo-liberalism. The two cannot be discarded. Neo-liberalism is already making an impact in the social-political situation in our country. The national democratic project, RDP, is ceaselessly under attack by the opposition and big business, aided by commercial press and reinforced by the multilateral institutions such as World Bank and IMF. This critics not only deny the viability of the project but seek an alternative to it. In their terms the debate around the RDP must be about modernisation of capitalism through the policies of neo-liberalism.

The notion democracy is the absence of the role of the state and "elite" groups in a society. In this scenario, democracy is decreased by bayonets and authoritarian power of the

market. But democracy is enlarged when when basic needs are met.

As it advocates control and domination of the market and restrain decision of a democratic state, and actions of social movements which are seen as elites. Neo-liberalism therefore narrow and choice and action. The call for cheap labour or wage restraint masks the real social coercion based on unequal bargaining power by the poor worker.

These creates condition of daily life of alienation as there is increasing pressure to produce and compete. As it entrench itself, neo-liberalism seek to inculcate a blind faith in the self regulatory power of the free markets.

We are observing and participating in a realtion of a international struggles such as Nigeria issue, Cuba Solidairity that bears the marks of old traditional form. It is very diverse, and encompasses various strata of social movements -peace, human rights, development, environment, student, trade union etc.

The impact of neo-liberalism

Our own national democratic project is feel

But on the hand, we should not forget the marginalised peoples of the world are potential friends and allies and they must be heard out and we need to seriously pay special attention to solidarity.

It is very important to trace lines of development of solidarity on the new order. International solidarity reflect a common vital interests of the working class and other democratic forces in the world against the forces of neo-liberalism. International solidarity has a strong tradition in our country and has developed together with other struggle assuming different content and forms: the very formation of South African communist Party was influenced by struggles of the working class and the third international, the worldwide anti-apartheid struggle. But the current tasks of the national democratic struggle creates difficult conditions for determining the criteria and content of international solidarity³, and in practicing its political and moral principles. The last decades have seen the growing tide of social and political experience against the dominant order. This struggles have an impact on the the features and content of solidarity. We are observing and participating in a realtion of a international solidarity that bears the marks of old traditional form. It is very diverse, and encompasses various strata of social movements -peace, human rights, development, environment, student, trade union etc.

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The development of the international solidarity is of praticlal imprtance of the realtionship between the international and the national in our trasnformation process. Experience shows the power and effectiveness of the international solidairty today among the working class and other democratic contigents. Our struggle must be encriched by this experiences of this emerging movement.

The era we have entered is known as the era of neo-liberal capitalism, who pratical record since the end of cold war shows that this is right concept for it.

Many countries of the Third World, including have followed main trends generated by this global economic order. Our national democratic project of sumountiing vast problems of undervelopment is occuirng within this context. At the same

The neolibreal roder is bringing changeThe last two years. But also the events and new experience of our struggle provide some material for theortical examining the meaning of htis era for the owrking class and popular forces.

First we must connect the theory of thenational democratic state with our own period, expressing the globalisation process is taking shape.

So we must comprehend this new situation though the prism of our own sepcfic context. The SACP 9 Congress programme captures this accurately.

It means mere deeper cmporehension of our national democrtic transformation experience

¹ ANC strategy and Tactics , pg 16

² See Raymond Suttner -foreing policy discussion

³ See Raymond Suttner -foreing policy discussion