

TASKS OF THE ANC IN THE PRESENT PERIOD.

1. NATURE OF OUR SOCIETY.

Our society is based on the oppression and exploitation of the black majority. Apartheid is a form of racist and colonial rule created as a result of armed conquest and dispossession by British imperialism, together with the white settler minority that today rules our country. When the British granted independence to South Africa in 1910 it did not hand over power to the people as whole but to the white minority. For the black people colonial rule and relations continued to operate.

In spite of attempts at reform and negotiations its main characteristics of apartheid remain :

- * a system of minority rule that excludes the black majority from the central organs of power. Political power remains the monopoly of the white minority.
- * racial domination and control of the economy by the white minority. This results from systematic dispossession of the indigenous peoples of their land and brutal exploitation of our people through cheap labour.

This form of oppression and exploitation generates a sense of national grievance and a quest for democracy and social justice by the majority of our country.

QUESTION : Do the proposed repeal of the Land Act, Population Registration Act and the Group Act change the essence of apartheid ?

(ON ALL QUESTIONS: BUZZ IN PAIRS FOR 2 MINUTES)

2. CHARACTER OF OUR STRUGGLE.

Our struggle is a national democratic revolution whose main content is the liberation of the black majority and in particular the African people.

Ours is a national struggle in that it "... involves people from all over the country and from all social groups. Its national character finds expression in forging one nation on the basis of equality." (see DPE education series in Mayibuye)

It is democratic in that it requires the transfer of power from the minority to the majority - " the democratisation of political, social and economic relations throughout our society."

Finally, it is revolutionary in that it entails the transformation of our society into a non-racial democratic South Africa.

Concretely, at the present conjuncture, transformation must involve:

- * the adoption of a democratic constitution by a democratically elected assembly of representatives of the people, guaranteeing fundamental human rights and underpinned by a Bill of Rights.
- * the election of a democratic government on the principle of one-person one-vote.
- * the restructuring of the economy, as mixed economy, that aims at high growth rates to meet the fundamental demands of our people, abolishing poverty and inequalities in the distribution of wealth.

Recent developments have not changed the strategic aims of our struggle. Our main objective remains the transfer of power to the people as whole for the transformation of our country into a non-racial democratic society, based on the demands contained in the Freedom Charter.

QUESTION : Is the transformation of our society achievable through the reform of apartheid ?

3. FORCES OF TRANSFORMATION AND FORMS OF STRUGGLE.

The attainment of our goals requires the unity, mobilisation and organisation of all the oppressed masses, together with democratic forces that fight against apartheid.

This entails the adoption of those forms of struggle that are based on the concrete conditions in which we operate and taking into account :

- * the real and pressing demands of our people. Today the demand for the speedy end to the crime of apartheid, for democracy and peace, have gripped the minds of the overwhelming majority of our country.
- * the alignment of forces within the ruling bloc, its strength and weaknesses, strategy and tactics, etc. In the present situation the deep crisis that is gripping apartheid, the deep divisions and confusion within apartheid forces has created the possibility of a peaceful advance towards our goal.

This situation has created a new set of conditions that make a negotiated transition viable.

It is in these conditions that the liberation movement, led by the ANC, adopted the road to peace, for a negotiated transition to a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa.

Just as in the past we saw the objective of armed seizure of power as the means to effect the transition, negotiations may now become a viable method for the transfer of power in the new conditions.

Why a negotiated settlement has become possible ?

Negotiations are a product of struggle and result from the victories scored by our people using a variety of forms of struggle against apartheid. Led by the ANC, the liberation alliance, pursued the four pillars of our strategy :

* mass action and mobilising around the day to day and national demands of the mass of our people, struggling against apartheid. In the present phase, mass mobilisation and struggle has become the cutting edge of our overall struggle.

" Our courageous people in all parts of South Africa, men and women, have been the main architects for the crumbling of apartheid...

" We, ... commit ourselves to tirelessly mobilising and organising our people for the prosecution of their historical task of finally bringing about a democratic united, non-racial, non-sexist South Africa."

(Declaration of the National Consultative Conference.)

* the underground provided political, strategic and tactical leadership. As a result the ANC gained popularity and the widest support as the leader in the struggle for a new South Africa.

Until a climate of free political activity exists and the process of a peaceful transition is irreversible, the ANC needs to maintain the underground. (para.(c) Conference Resolution on Underground and MK)

* the armed activities led by MK delivered telling blows against the foundations of apartheid . The ANC suspended armed actions to facilitate movement forward in the negotiation process. The armed struggle, the training and maintenance of MK remain crucial until a new democratic constitution has been adopted. (see para. (a) & (b) of Resolution above)

* international mobilisation economic sanctions and cultural isolation undermined the capacity of the regime to win any political support, acquire necessary investments, etc.

The combination of all these created a balance of forces that forced the apartheid regime to enter into negotiations with the ANC thus creating the possibility of a settlement.

The deep all round crisis resulting from the sustained offensive by the people forced the apartheid regime to recognise that white domination and its privileges could no longer be protected *in the old way.*

In entering negotiations the apartheid state has a definite agenda, that of the defence of white domination and its privileges. (see DPE paper " One Year of Unbanned ANC : The Road Ahead " section on the Main Strategic Objectives of the Regime after Feb 2nd)

This serves to remind us that negotiations is a contested terrain - an intense site of struggle.

QUESTION : a) What are the main objectives of the apartheid regime in the period of negotiations ?

b) What level of strength on our side and what weaknesses on their side is required to secure the transfer of power to the people.?

4. THE ANC AND THE MASSES.

For the ANC, the masses are the key to victory !

" We believe that only our organised and militant people can write the final chapter of our struggle." (Declaration of the Consultative Conference.)

The black oppressed masses stand to gain from the victory of this struggle, particular the African people who are the most adversely affected by the policies of apartheid. But black people do not form a homogeneous group. There are workers, rural masses, women, youth and students, professionals, business people, traditional leaders, etc.

The black working class is subject to the worst forms of exploitation and constitute the vast majority of the oppressed masses. In the process of struggle and organisation, they have emerged as the leading force.

Despite apartheid's systematic division of our society into black and white, a dedicated core of white democrats have always fought alongside their black brothers and sisters. The deepening crisis of apartheid and increasing violence in the last few years has seen the growth of the movement for democracy and peace within the white community.

The ANC, as the leading organisation of our people, bears the responsibility to mobilise, organise and unite all these forces for the speedy end to apartheid for the transformation of our country into a new South Africa. The urgent tasks facing the ANC are :

1. To build the ANC into a strong, non-racial and democratic organisation that enables the mass of our people to become active participants both in the life of the organisation and processes that shape the future of our country. The ANC must become the political home for all South Africans - of all communities, classes and social groups. The programme of action adopted by the Consultative Conference is important in this connection.

The ANC branch as the basic unit of the organisation, must become the nerve centre in this process.

2. To ensure the widest possible mobilisation and organisation of our people. This includes :

a) Mass Independent Formations.

It is the task of the ANC " to encourage the formation and strengthening of independent, democratic mass formations of the people " - trade unions, civics and village committees, youth and women's organisations, students, professionals, etc.

At the moment there is confusion over the relationship that must exist between the ANC and mass formations. There is no doubt that there is a need for the ANC to develop a structured relationship with these formations without undermining their independence. At the same time the ANC as a liberation movement needs to be involved in the day-to-day issues that affect our people, including housing, rent and electricity cut offs, workers rights, etc. without taking over the specific role of these formations. The ANC's role is primarily political i.e. relate the day-to-day demands to the broader political questions.

b) Tripartite Alliance.

The liberation alliance of the ANC/SACP and COSATU must be strengthened and made to work at all levels of our struggle and organisation.

This entails structuring the alliance at branch, regional and national levels to ensure dynamic co-ordination and consultation. As far as the branches are concerned this must take into account the fact that COSATU has no structures in the township. The establishment of ANC zonal structures would go a long way to provide a link with COSATU locals.

c) Broad Patriotic Front.

All those forces committed to the transition of our country into a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa must be brought together into a broad patriotic front.

The bilateral discussions and consultation the ANC is continuously holding with different organisations around the question of peace, negotiations, the winning of democratic space in the Bantustans, etc. are creating the necessary ground work for such a front to be constituted.

The widest organisation, mobilisation and active participation of all our people is crucial in this phase. Negotiations is an intense terrain of struggle. The new conditions of the opening of political space, the deep crisis and divisions within the ruling bloc, the desire of the overwhelming majority of our people for peace and democracy offer wider possibility for unity in action. This requires a lot of creativity and the exercise of the necessary flexibility in our approach.

QUESTION : a) Is being an ANC member a condition of membership in the civic, trade union, etc. ?

b) Who should be brought into the Patriotic Front ?

There are a number of issues facing our people today in order to advance speedily towards a peaceful transition. Key among these are :

- * the realisation of a climate of free political activity which includes the repeal of all repressive legislation, the end of violence (counter-revolutionary and inter-organisational)
- * the removal of all obstacles to negotiations which include the release of all political prisoners, end to political trials and detentions, return of all exiles.
- * the establishment of an Interim govt to supervise and committed to the process of democratic transition.
- * convening of democratically elected Constituent Assembly.

The ANC has called for the convening of an All Party Conference, involving all organisations with a proven constituency, to work out the mechanism of the transition by :

- * agreeing on the principles that must form the basis of a democratic constitution.
- * determining the make-up body, such as an elected Constituent Assembly, that would draw up the constitution.
- * establishing an Interim Government to oversee the process of transition until a new parliament was elected, and a democratic govt formed, on the basis of the new constitution.

QUESTION : a) Who should be included in the Interim Govt.?

b) Who should come to the APC ?

- only political parties ?
- all organisations with a proven constituencies including trade union organisations like Cosatu, the Civics, etc.?

5. MASS PROGRAMME OF ACTION.

" As we stand on the threshold of the most challenging period of our struggle, we declare that 1991 will be the year of MASS ACTION FOR THE TRANSFER OF POWER TO THE PEOPLE." (Declaration)

" We, ... dedicate ourselves to making the year 1991 a year of mass action for the transfer of power to the through ...programme of action." (Resolution)