

What is a Nation.

We have guiding definitions already of what a nation is. Joseph Stalin and Lenin gave definitions of a nation which are widely used by those who genuinely want to solve the national question.

Stalin left us the following definition: "A nation is primarily a community, a definite community of people. This community is not racial, nor is it tribal. The modern Italian nation was formed of Romans, Teutons, Etruscans, Greeks, Arabs and so forth. The French nation was formed from Gaul, Romans, Britons, Teutons and so forth... Thus a nation is not racial or tribal, but a historically constituted community of people stable community of people. (See Stalin, Maxism and the National Question, 1913).

Lenin, the founder of the Maxism of our time usually referred to as Leninism came out with a more precise definition of what a nation is all about:

"The nation is a lasting historical community of people constituting a form of social development based on the community of economic life in a combination with language, territory, culture, consciousness and psychology. (See Lenin and the National Question; Institute of Maxism-Leninism (PSU 1977)

The aim of course is to apply the essence of these definitions to our situation taking the roots of reality of situation into serious consideration. It is also very important to ask a bold question: Can we honestly claim that there is a South African Nation today? And the social question needs a bold answer and taking our situation seriously we find that the answer is NO.

The birth of the ANC in 1912 was unity of a new kind, it was the birth of a new nation - a black oppressed nation. Those who participated at Maung on 8 January 1912 gave birth to this nation.

Since its inception the ANC never lost sight of the fact that the brunt of the struggle must be borne by the Africans themselves and that the main content of our struggle is the national liberation of the black majority. However, there is no doubt that it is in the interest of our movement, our people and our struggle that the oppressed Indian and Coloured people be worn over to the side of the Africans. Hence today, in our revolutionary language, when we talk of the black majority we include our Indian and Coloured sections of our population. Hence we correctly say today that the ANC is leading the oppressed majority and democratic ^{Peoples} in the final onslaught on the apartheid system and for the capture of state power.

We do have in the same country both the white oppressor nation and the oppressed black nation and in our struggle for national liberation we are also creating the infrastructure of the unborn nation. And we can say without hesitation that the entire membership of the ANC represent the genuine embryo of that South African nation ^{and} that ^{is} ^{is} high ^{is} of the list of our revolutionary priorities. Ours is not a stable community as Stalin's definition demands but a South African nation in the process of been born. It is very ^{far from what} that Stalin's

definition demands, but ^{our} a South African nation ^{is} in the process of been born. ~~It is very~~ that Stalin's ^{definition} mentioned ^{is} about is inadequate to express our process of nation - building. It carries meaning when applied to the matured nations of Europe and North America and surely not of Africa.

The white oppressor nation in our country will have no alternative but to heed the well-known formulation of Marx and Engels that "a people that oppresses other people cannot itself be free".

Our Freedom Charter proclaims quite clearly:

" All national groups shall have equal rights. All people shall have equal rights to use their own languages, and to develop their own folk culture and customs; all national groups shall be protected by law against insults to their race and national pride"

An honest beginning in dealing with our national problem would be to start by recognising that our population consists of various communities or groups with distinct historical and cultural backgrounds and characteristics as well as customs etc. We have living examples that any attempt at ignoring the national issue can lead to untold suffering and disaster ^{ous} failures.

In our case, the capture of state power will lead to the gradual withering away national oppression, racism, group privilege and it will arm us with the necessary tools to prepare the groundwork for future unification of all different peoples into a single South African nation.

Before 1912 our people fought as separate ethnic groups and were armed with inferior weapons and as a result they could not stop the invading settlers. But in 1912 our people fully expressed their aspirations for unity.

As the struggle intensifies and we are at the same time laying the foundations of a new nation, members of our great movement should not be identified by their origin but by their commitment to the cause of revolution. The entire membership of our movement should not be regarded as representatives of any race, ethnic group or religion but as committed cadres of our movement. We are all involved in the struggle not to liberate a region, a race, a tribe or a religion but to liberate the oppressed nation and to build a true South African nation.

It is very important to analyse whether in our case the capture of state power by the people will override and destroy tribal, regional, racial and religious divisions as soon as possible.

The non-racial character of struggle also refers to the right of all people to equal citizenship, to political, social and economic rights, irrespective of their race, or "national" features, history, culture, customs, language etc. All these features will not disappear automatically under a unitary and democratic South Africa ^{founded} on the noble ideals enshrined in the freedom charter.

A united democratic South Africa will have as its duty not only the cultural and psychological liberation of the oppressed but also the liberation of the present oppressor nation. NO doubt ~~that~~ the destruction of the apartheid system of social organisation is pre-requisite to the building of a free South African nation. We are busy laying the foundation for a true single South African nation which will recognise the full rights of all various national groups in our country.

yet we should not ignore our history. How aware and consistent were the founding fathers of the ANC, both individually and collectively on the national question? How did organs like Abantu - Batho encourage and struggle to cement the novel unity that gained in 1912? Are we still ^{it} faced with the problem of reactionary nationalism and how do we deal with ¹

We say in our strategy and tactics that our struggle for national liberation is closely linked with our struggle for economic emancipation. The capture of state power will arm us with the necessary tools to enter "the second war of liberation. - the struggle for genuine economic independence".

It is also important to examine the likely ^{correl} ~~carelation~~ of forces within the new nation that will be born and the position these forces will take in that on-going struggle.

The satanic designs such as the Bantustan fraud were ^v ~~made~~ ^v ~~to~~ further divide the oppressed people and to buy a longer lease of life for the apartheid system. However even the die-hards of the system agree that it has been disappointing failure.

Bantustan puppets such as Buthelezi have now conscript ^{ed} themselves completely on the side of the enemy and turned their venom on the ANC. In his decisive and dangerous tactics Buthelezi has called on the Zulu people to attack his oponents particularly members of the UDF. Even King Goodwill Zwelithini has joined the historical propaganda war against. Recently he said "The Zulu people know a hyena when they see it and they call it a hyena. We know UDF activists when we see them and we call them UDF". He also added that he will mobilize the Zulu people to fight the ANC leaders if its "exile leaders" try to come back to South Africa.

The Muzorewa of South Africa ^{is} ~~is~~ in the making [^] abusing the Zulu people in his designs and trying to divide the oppressed. Those who are moulding him claim that he is the leader of the biggest tribe after the white tribe, ^{ehaj} he does not get intoxicated by communist propaganda and ~~he~~ respects foreign investments.

All the Bantustan collaborators are getting high salaries which they use in buying shares in a number of projects, collecting shops, casinos, hotels, bottlestores, etc.

The enemy hopes that ^{the black propertied class} they will be vigilant in defending the status and because they will be having something of their own to defend. Of course the petty-bourgeois clique of the category of the Tebehalis and the E. T. Shabalalas of population. ~~They~~ are all used to wreck our unity - the unity of the oppressed.

The same applied to the budding black petty-bourgeois in NAFSOC group. They will be used to disturb our anti-imperialist and anti-colonial unity. The growth of the African bourgeoisie is seen by both local and international monopoly capital as "a factor of stability" and a source of "economic competition far dangerous than revolutionary violence. Their thinking is that since they have "acquired a stake in the system" they have all reasons to defend it against those who want to change it fundamentally.

The Language Question

The language issue is surely not acting as divisive issue in our movement. But one cannot ignore the possibilities of it becoming a divisive issue in the future if no ideological in-posture is created for solving this question amicably in the future. The language is the most important means of human intercourse.

At present the cadres of our movement do not object, at least not openly, to the use of English as "the language of the oppressor". These are hidden objections to the use of Afrikaans "which is the language of "our present Afrikaner oppressors". But it is also the language of an important detachment of the black majority - the Coloured people. Diluted Afrikaans or "flytaal" as it is commonly known is used by both young and the old cadres of our movement. During cultural activities such as parties, football matches etc it is commonly used.

We surely have to look at whether there is any hostility towards the use of any of our languages and where this hostility stems from. We must also avoid by all means any attempt to forcefully implement any language.

Proper preparations will make our liberated citizens be prepared to use a language without been forced by any laws to do so. There should also be a feeling that no language retains any kind of privilege over others.

Our enemies want us divided and if possible not able to communicate with each other. They engineered Xhosa-Sotho fights at hostels such as Dube Hostel and many others. The word "struggle continues" carries a revolutionary meaning to all comrades even if not written in their mother tongues. To mobilise the Afrikaner perhaps we should learn hard to write the slogan in Afrikaans, Pedi, Tswana, Shangaan, S. Sotho, Xhosa, Zulu etc.

At present even at our school in Mazimbu our languages are not taught. We have no language groups to upgrade ourselves in our languages and perhaps begin the heavy task of giving them a scientific meaning if we are to use them in our scientific analysis of our socio-economic problems.

We cannot wait to start this process - this developmental education after independence. Whatever the problems, they should not hinder the teaching of our languages at Mazimbu.

Our Department of Education could convene a seminar on the language issue and problems we are likely to face. The Department of Art and Culture could also be instrumental in this endeavor.

For us to wage a meaningful literacy campaign in the country after independence, we will need to have a reasonably high command of our national languages. One cannot expect to teach 65 year old Shangaan lady in English if she does not speak a word of the language.

At the political level, branch, unit meetings in different areas could be addressed in our languages. But again this implies that our political and ideological as well as socio-economic message must be carried to the people in these languages. But we will delay the process if we don't start equipping ourselves now with the necessary language tools.

One can argue that without a common language it will be difficult to have a cohesive expression of people's power and people's aspirations. Most of our languages are widely understood by many people. People from the urban areas speak three, four or so of our languages and all they need is a further upgrading.

Some of the comrades have suggested a policy of bilingualism. In our meetings people allowed to use their languages as long as adequate translation is available. In our country there is an increasing publication of material in our languages. But much still need to be done and we should do part of that process.

For our future education and socio-economic development, we need to seriously consider the development of an official language. The present demands of our struggle with their emphasis on unity in action and consolidating national unity as well as the creation of a new South African nation after independence also imply the need for consistent effort and

and careful consideration of a national language.

The question is whether the majority of our people will see the advancement of one official language as a threat to national languages or as advancement of our socio-economic struggle. The process should be seen also as an advancement of and guarantee, the eventual progress of our national languages, otherwise the creation of subjective infrastructure for the process will be very difficult indeed.

We have already what the Pretoria regime use as official languages i.e. English and Afrikaans. Can our people after independence adopt them, enrich them with new words, fresh idioms and construction? Or have they already done that even under the present oppressive conditions?

Common Economy

Those who claim that we have one nation at present use the question of economic as their measuring rod. We have agreed that we are a colony of a special type where the oppressor and the oppressed are rubbing shoulders in one country. Although our economy is still dependent on international monopoly capital and serving the interest our economy has a highly developed physical infrastructure. Local production in our case is not geared only to satisfy the tastes of the "colonial bourgeoisie". The masses of our people still suffer as migrant workers in their own country of births, forced labour is still the order of the day and our country still serves as a raw material paradise and a meeting place for international monopoly capital.

After the capture of state power we are going to struggle for the building of one independent national economy and abolish all schemes of the apartheid state to create bantustan economies artificially 'separated' from what they call the economy of the Republic proper.

What difficulties are we going to meet in our socialisation process? i.e. the implementation of the economic pillars of the Freedom Charter that deal with the process of nationalisation and control?

The bulk of the economy is in the hands of a few "robber barons" both foreign and local.

What is our approach to the budding black petty-bourgeoisie. Although they are faced with serious and unique South African disabilities that hinders and will continue to hinder their development perhaps until independence, the main question is how are they going to position themselves after independence. In the execution of our process of national democratic revolution we are going to face both international monopoly capital, local bourgeoisie and the budding black petty bourgeoisie. They might conscript themselves completely on the side of the enemy in order to defend their "interests".

Is our policy to prevent the new group and "kill the crocodile while it is still small" or are living them to thrive with the hope they might not grow to become the enemy of the revolution? Will they betray their selfish interests and respect the interests of the nation as a whole or will they become a vital detachment of those who are crying back exploitative and brutal system.

What problems are we going to face in capturing the commanding heights of the economy in our way towards a genuinely independent national economy?

How are going to reactivate abandoned factories and plants.

Preparations for our fulfilling our responsibilities on this issue should start now during our liberation struggle. It is not per chance that the struggle is called the university of life where committed cadres learn how to exercise state power in the interest of the people.

How is the whole new nation going to contribute in the building of a national economy. There is a mistaken view that South Africa is a developed economy. It is not. It has one toe in the developed category and the other nine in the "Third World". We have poverty, hunger, illiteracy although the country had enough resources to irradiate the said ills.

In our struggle for national liberation we cannot ignore the class aspect of our struggle particularly the correlation of forces at present the position they are likely to take in our struggle for genuine economic independence. The black workers - the producers of material wealth in our country are in the forefront using their strike power as a weapon liberation. The slogan could be "We need our rights, all our rights and demand them now". In a national democratic revolution the national bourgeoisie does not necessary become a target if it does not threaten the revolutionary process.