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ISIZWE

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THE PEOPLE SHALL GOVERN

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The views expressed in these papers are not the official views of the UDF or any section of the Front. They are designed to encourage discussion, debate and education among comrades.





building people's power

In our meetings, rallies, in our publications we often advance the Freedom Charter demand: THE PEOPLE SHALL GOVERN! This is a call that has been taken up by millions of South Africans. But we sometimes think of this demand as a far-off goal that will only be realised suddenly, on a single heroic day in the future.

It is true that the fullest consolidation of people's power is still in the future. It is true that control over central state power is the key to many things. Without this the democratic say and participation that millions of South Africans have over their lives, will always be limited. Nevertheless, the building of people's power is something that is already beginning to happen in the course of our struggle. It is not for us to sit back and merely dream of the day that the people shall govern. It is our task to start to realise that goal now. We must start the process of liberating South Africa. We must begin to place power in the hands of the people, in all spheres - the economy, education, culture, crime control, health, in fact, wherever it is possible.



Even in the present we must start to build the beginnings of our future society. Developing people's power now will help to ensure the fullest growth of our society in a South Africa free of apartheid. Even if PW Botha's government collapsed tomorrow, would our people be able to run the machinery of an advanced industrial society? Would women be sure of an end to their three-fold oppression - as workers, as oppressed blacks and as house-hold slaves? Building people's power is a training ground, a school for the future. People need to know that even after apartheid, they will have to be their own liberators. The confidence and many of the skills must be gained now, not in the distant future. By building democratic people's power we are also placing a brake on elitism and individualism that could still emerge in a new South Africa.

But let us be clearer about what we mean when we speak of people's power.

people's power and the enemy's power

Power in our country has been used by a racial minority to oppress the majority. Power in our country has been used by a small class of bosses to exploit the majority of workers. All the machinery of state power - its laws, administration, courts, police force and army, - serves to uphold this oppression and exploitation. Power in our society rests in this machinery of state, and also in the private ownership of factories, big farms, mines and banks.

When we speak of people's power we are not thinking

of putting our leaders into the very same structures. We do not want Nelson Mandela (Mandela himself does not want) to be state president in the same kind of parliament as Botha. We do not want Walter Sisulu to be chairperson of a capitalist Anglo American corporation. We are struggling for a different system where power is no longer in the hands of the rich and powerful. We are struggling for a government that we all vote for. We are struggling for elected bodies in our schools, factories and communities. We want laws that are widely discussed throughout our country, street committee by street committee before they are even debated in parliament.

We want courts where workers, peasants and teachers can be elected as magistrates. We want elected magistrates who are rooted in the communities in which they are serving. We want an army that belongs to all, in a country where all citizens are armed. We want a police force that protects workers, students and all democrats in South Africa - not a police force that protects the laws of the minority and the property of the rich.

All of this is what we mean by people's power. These are important general demands to remember. But it is also important to see how these things connect with the actual struggles that are happening at the moment.

building people's power

The year 1985 has marked a turning point in our struggle. Like never before, in a whole series of sectors we have begun not just to demand a people's government, but we have begun to build in that direction.

In the struggles in the schools, students, parents and teachers have begun to take some control over education. Collectively they have begun to make space for alternative, progressive programmes to be included. In some places they have begun to exert real control over appointments and dismissals of teachers. Of course the fullest development of people's power in education, as elsewhere, is far from realised. The gains we have made, have been won often with our own blood. However, something very important has begun to happen. In the words of Lulu Johnson, of the now banned COSAS, "While we cannot yet completely run our schools, the government has now lost the ability to run them". This is an area of ongoing struggle, where there are two contending powers.

In the townships all over the country the community council system has collapsed. Elsewhere communities marked out for forced removal to Bantustans have successfully resisted. This has created a power vacuum in many cases. In many communities the old oppressive administrative structures have been destroyed. Owing to mass resistance, many townships have become no-go areas for police and army. The police fear to move around freely. When they do move into townships they often cannot enforce law and order. People do not approach them readily to report ordinary crimes. At the same time in the embattled townships of the Karroo, Eastern Cape, Border and also in some Transvaal townships, we are beginning to see the development of street committees.

One of the first townships to introduce street committees in the 1980s was the Cradock township of Lingelihle. Under the guidance of the Cradock Residents Association and its chairperson, Matthew Goniwe, Lingelihle with 17 000 residents was divided into seven zones. About forty activists were assigned to these different areas and were responsible for

holding meetings in each zone. Meetings were held in each area to elect officials and each household could vote for their street representative. More recently street committees have been operating very effectively in the townships of Port Elizabeth and in the Transvaal in Atteridgeville and Naledi. These committees can withstand heavy repression. Street representatives can keep a low profile, and they are protected by all the people on the street. If the street representative is detained, the street can appoint another one.

On the factory floor the steady growth of the progressive trade union movement, and especially the launch of the new super-federation COSATU also has important significance for building people's power. Through their democratic, shop steward structures, and through their struggle with bosses over working conditions and wages, the unions give to workers the experience of a new kind of power. Of course, so long as the state is in the hands of the exploiting class, workers will not be able to secure significant control over production. But trade unions begin to build the collective power and the democratic experience that will make this possible. It is interesting to note that in January this year there was a massive upsurge of strikes. More than 385 000 working days were lost in January compared with 5 000 in January last year. Quite a number of these strikes were not just over questions of wages, but over 'racial incidents'. That is to say that workers, influenced by the political struggles, are challenging the racist power structures in the production process.

In the last few months organised workers have begun to develop a new, significant strategy in their struggles with the bosses. In at least four cases since September 1985 there have been factory occupations or sit-ins by workers. In September last year 300 workers at the Bosch factory in Brits, Transvaal went on strike over wages demands. The workers

were members of the Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU). On September 5, management dismissed the striking workers and ordered them off the premises. But there was a surprise waiting for the bosses. The workers refused to leave the factory. They decided to stay inside until their demands were met. That night the union, family members and the community began to bring food and blankets to the factory for the workers inside. The bosses realised the workers were serious. Early the next morning the bosses gave in and agreed to most of the workers' demands.

Moses Mayekiso, a MAWU organiser says: " The experience was important for workers and several important lessons were learnt. Firstly, workers realised that they had real power. They learnt that the real power to control production lay with them, not the bosses. Secondly, they saw the only way to protect their jobs was through fighting.

"A sit-in makes it difficult to cross the picket line - to scab - and it makes it difficult for the police to smash the workers inside. In addition, the rest of the community gets involved. Workers inside the factory depend on them for material support. The consciousness of non-workers is raised and links are forged between them and the workers". (SALB, Jan. 1986)

Since then there have been similar occupations by 2 000 bakery workers in Durban, 90 Printpak Gravure workers in Industria, Johannesburg, and 250 workers at Chesebrough Ponds.

There are many other examples we can give of how in the course of struggle, people are beginning to build up the organs of people's power - defence units,

people's clinics, soup kitchens, people's courts. The development of people's power is however, still in its early days. This development is happening in a situation which is different, in some ways, from other struggles. We have therefore to learn from our own experiences and share information about victories, problems and mistakes.

We can already begin to point to some lessons we have learnt.

lessons, problems and difficulties

1. ORGANS OF PEOPLE'S POWER MUST BE DEMOCRATIC AND THEY MUST BE UNDER POLITICAL DISCIPLINE.

In several cases militant youth, or others, have taken the initiative and set up independent "people's courts". While the idea behind such independent attempts was well intended, the results have often been negative. Such courts must be rooted in organisation that enjoys the support of the great majority of the township, zone or street where the court is to operate. If this is not the case, such courts will be resented by the community. They will be imposing an external discipline. It is especially important to ensure that there are democratically elected persons in these courts, and that it is not just the youth who are represented in them.

Where the level of organisation does not permit this, then it is an error to proceed with the formation of such courts. It is crucial that such courts are seen to be defenders of the people. Their main

task is political and educational, and not the handing out of punishment. If these organs are not deeply rooted in democratic, political organisation then they are open to corruption or hijacking by criminal elements.

In some areas there have been very good experiences in the popular control of crime. In the Uitenhage townships, where the communities consciously see themselves as implementing the Freedom Charter clause, THE PEOPLE SHALL GOVERN, crime has dropped significantly. In these townships the people are organised on a zone, area and street level. Complaints and disputes are settled here, not by the apartheid authorities. Where offenders need to be apprehended it is done by volunteers who are instructed that they must not use violence against the people. They are told that their conduct must at all times be in line with our overall democratic political goals. The emphasis is placed on discussion and education, to convince the people of the need for unity and to curb anti-social acts.

In Atteridgeville it is the democratically elected area committees that take most responsibility for controlling anti-social acts. This is seen as being part and parcel of the community beginning to take control of all aspects of their lives, including law and order. Generally problems are sorted out through the street committee channels. People's courts only come in on rare and extreme cases - like misconduct by officials in people's organisations, or in serious criminal acts.

2. THE ORGANS OF PEOPLE'S POWER ARE NOT BUILT UP PASSIVELY, OUTSIDE OF THE ONGOING STRUGGLE.

Sometimes people present the task of building people's power in a very abstract way. They imagine that we

can warm up the structures of people's power quietly in the change-rooms of history, like a reserve squad, while others are waging the actual struggle. Sometimes we hear the argument that we must suspend militant action so that we can build structures. True, there are times for flat out struggle, and other times for regrouping and repairing. But in fact all our experience shows that it is only in and through militant struggle that we make the space to build people's power.

In a sense many of the significant developments of people's power can be seen as defensive measures growing into offensive weapons. We must at all times understand the constant connections between mobilising and organising and back to mobilising again. We may place the stress more on one aspect or the other at a particular time. But the one makes space for the other. The development of street committees after months of intense struggle in the embattled townships of the Eastern Cape, Karroo and Border is an example. In a sense this development was defensive. It was compelled by the deaths and detentions of leaders. It was necessary to deepen and democratise organisation, so that the struggle would survive the loss of leadership. The development of street committees, and regular house meetings has also been a defensive response to the banning of mass rallies. But this defensive response has in fact carried the struggle forward. In trying to ensure survival and ongoing contact with the mass base through the development of street committees, organisations have begun to develop the basic organs of people's power - what the Freedom Charter calls 'Democratic organs of selfgovernment'.

In turn the network of street committees has shown that when mass rallies, for instance, are needed they can be quickly assembled, and that complicated decisions can be taken. Many of us were surprised at the unanimity with which 50 000 people decided

to suspend the Eastern Cape boycott at a mass meeting at the end of last year. It was because the leaders knew that this was what the people wanted.

They had gathered in people's views. They had the organisation to do this at street level, in structures built long before the mass rally.

The same positive growth out of a defensive measure can be seen in the development of people's clinics in several townships. In a situation where victims of police and SADF shootings are often automatically arrested on admission to hospital, it has become necessary to provide alternative treatment. But in setting up people's clinics, and in training comrades in basic first aid skills, we are also beginning to plant the seeds of a new society. It will be a society where the people have democratic control over all aspects of their lives. Of course, in this case as in others, we must be clear that we do not aspire at this stage to erect a completely alternative health structure. The medical facilities, the big hospitals, and the clinics that do exist in our country should belong to all. The struggle of progressive nurses, doctors, paramedics and others for a democratic health service available to all, including the rural areas should not be confined to the question of people's clinics in the townships. At the same time medical professionals must place their struggles under the discipline of the mass-based democratic organisations.

We must have no illusions about the difficulties of building people's power. The gains we make in developing organs of people's power are not necessarily permanent. We are locked into a massive power struggle, we have made important gains, but these are not necessarily irreversible.

3. THE PROBLEM OF REFORMISM AND CO-OPTION.

Another problem that has begun to emerge very concretely in our struggle is the question of whether particular structures or actions are reformist, that is whether they simply streamline the apartheid system, or not. Should our people's organisations take responsibility for running creches in our townships? Or should we put pressure on the government to supply creches? When local administration collapses, should our organisations take responsibility for refuse removal? Or should we demand that the state resumes this service? This is a concrete question. It has confronted comrades in the townships of Uitenhage, for instance. When people's organisations run soup kitchens, as they do in Atlantis, are they forgetting the struggle and becoming charity organisations?

In trying to answer these questions it is very important not to take a particular policy out of its political situation. The removal of rubbish, or the supplying of creche services or soup kitchens, is neither reformist or progressive in itself. It depends on the concrete situation, and the way in which these actions are combined with other activities. The supplying of creches, or of soup must never become an end in itself. Otherwise we will simply be making apartheid a little more bearable. In the Transvaal lately, youths have been clearing rubbish from vacant fields and establishing people's parks. This civic action has occurred in a situation in which there had been dangers of militant youth getting too far ahead and thereby isolating themselves from the rest of the community. This rubbish clearing served a very important political function. Apart from making socially useful places for leisure, it helped to rebuild popular unity. Similarly, the development of soup kitchens in Atlantis has been used to extend organisation to develop contact with the masses. It has also been used to give the people themselves the experience of organisation.

On the other hand, we do not want to tie our organisation down in the endless supply of services, if this means that

they forget the main task of political struggle. We must, therefore, approach every issue from a political standpoint. We must always ask what possibilities it has for advancing the struggle. We may give different answers to the same action in different situations.

The entire national wealth of our country must be shared. There must be non-racial, fully elected organs of government at all levels from the street through the municipality to the national government itself. Without these things the services that people's organisations offer, can always only be partial and poorly funded. If we organise these services, then this must contribute to our basic political and economic goals.

beyond the townships

Finally, we must guard against a tendency to imagine that people's power is confined to our townships and schools. These may be the main trenches of our struggle; it is here that we might begin to build our organs of people's power. But people's power must not be locked up in the ghettos and group areas. People's power can only be consolidated if it addresses the existing structures of power in the ruling bloc. These structures of power are concentrated in the institutions of government and in the major economic centres. In this let us be guided by the demands of the Freedom Charter, which calls for the wealth to be returned to those who produce it, and which calls for the people to govern a single, united South Africa.

questions for discussion

1. Is it really possible to speak about people's power before there is majority rule in South Africa?
 2. In the national liberation struggles in Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe, for instance, the first basic organs of people's power (people's committees, clinics, schools, courts, etc) were built up in liberated zones in the distant countryside. Will our experience in South Africa be different? If there are differences how do we explain them?
 3. How do we judge whether a particular program is reformist or not?
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Dear Isizwe

Here in Kwazekela comrades are using words like populists, nationalists and workerists. Each one is saying the other one is this thing, or the other thing. These discussions are happening this side.

In my way of thinking, comrades often use words they do not understand. Sometimes these arguments are like the argument if a horse is an animal or a horse. Do you see my point?

To make our struggle go forward it is better to be clear on this matter. For me it is right to say workers must be the leading class. We workers make the wealth of our country. There are more workers than any other group. It is said that workers have nothing to lose but our chains. So I say "VIVA the Working Class!" We must lead in the struggle. But then people say to me this is workerist.

Then again I say the workers must unite in the UDF with all progressives, students, the youth, teachers and nurses, and the starving families in the homelands. We need all the unity to build a big force against apartheid. Then people say I am populist.

It seems to me people either do not want a horse to be an animal, nor either any animal to be a horse. Comrades, we must make ourselves clear on these matters.

YOURS IN STRUGGLE
J. MLANGENI



the errors of populism

The UDF has achieved massive mobilisation all over South Africa in the short space of 2½ years. This confirms, once more, in the hard school of struggle, the correctness of our broad strategy. In South Africa, the struggle to end all forms of oppression and exploitation is most effective and most speedily advanced by the broadest popular alliance. We call this a strategy of national democratic struggle.

This broad strategy is, however, sometimes labelled 'populist' by certain people. We are told that our use of the term 'the people' in our slogans (Forward to People's Power! The People Shall Govern!) proves that we are populist. These accusations are in fact false. Let us understand this issue more clearly.

popular but not populist

First, it is important to understand how WE use the term 'the people'. We use this term to distinguish

between the two major camps in our society - the enemy camp and the people's camp. The people's camp is made up of the overwhelming majority of South Africans - the black working class, the rural masses, the black petty bourgeoisie (traders), and black middle strata (clerks, teachers, nurses, intellectuals). The people's camp also includes several thousand whites who stand shoulder to shoulder in struggle with the majority.

The main common goals that unite the people's camp are:

- * the struggle to remove all racial oppression;
- * the struggle to remove the grip of the monopoly companies over our country;
- * and the struggle to build democratic majority rule in a unified South Africa.

In this popular struggle, the UDF has identified the working class as the leading class. The capitalist system itself has brought workers together into a single collective force. It is this capitalist system that has removed them from the countryside and left them with nothing to lose - no land, no private wealth, no individual professional skills.

The capitalist system has put the workers, millions strong, into the power-house of our country. It is there together, down the mines, on the large white farms, in the factories and big shops, that the workers make most of the wealth of our country. And all the time, this great productive army, the working class, is being exploited by the bosses.

You have only to list these things to see why we say that the workers must play the leading role in

the national democratic struggle. The workers are the key to victory for the whole people's camp. Everyday of their lives, workers learn the great lesson of democratic struggle - that as individuals they are weak, but collectively they are strong.

Only this class, because of its numbers, discipline and its major role within production, can guarantee the fullest development of democracy in our country.

national democratic struggle and ultra left

But if the UDF sees the working class as so important, why bother with a broad popular alliance based on the strategy of a national democratic struggle? That is precisely the question asked by some ultra-leftists who label us as 'populist'. We will deal with the ultra-left position in other issues of Isizwe. But in order to understand the question of populism more accurately, let us at least sketch out the main grounds of our reply to the ultra-left.

As we began by saying, the last 2½ years have confirmed, in the hard school of struggle, the correctness of our broad strategy. Nowhere else in the world will you find an advanced capitalist country that is so unstable as South Africa. Nowhere else will you find a developed industrial country in which the exploiting class is so under threat in the medium term, in which it has failed to win over to its side such a broad majority of people. In fact at present, South Africa is a weak link in the imperialist chain. Of course, there are countries like El Salvador and the Philippines that are much

weaker in the world imperialist system. But these are poor, underdeveloped countries. So why does an advanced country like South Africa present such a special case?

a special combination

It has to do with the special combination of problems in South Africa. South Africa is a capitalist country, where the economy is based on private profits for the bosses, and not on the needs of the majority. Like any capitalist country, South Africa suffers from low wages, unemployment and high prices.

But on top of these sufferings, the bosses in South Africa have also made use of other special means of control. Besides the usual capitalist exploitation, we also find national (or racial) oppression. In the past this combination of exploitation and oppression has made the ruling group in South Africa very strong. But now things are beginning to change.

The mass struggles against low wages, high prices and unemployment are linking up with mass resistance to a whole range of national oppressions - gutter education, forced removals, pass laws, puppet administrations, police and army terror. This combination of mass struggles is a great threat to the enemy camp. The enemy camp is more isolated from the broad majority, and more and more an international embarrassment for its foreign backers.

the popular struggle - threat to capitalism

This is why South Africa is beginning to be such a weak link in the imperialist chain. The combination of mass struggles against exploitation and national oppression threatens the long term survival of capitalism itself. No wonder the international imperialists and our own local big capitalists are so anxious to 'de-racialise' South Africa. They are suddenly complaining that 'capitalism' is getting a bad name in South Africa, because the majority of South Africa's blacks associate it with apartheid'.

In the past, the bosses were happy to profit from apartheid. Now they say they would love to reform South Africa into a normal capitalist country. If only they could do it without risking their position of control in South Africa and in the whole of Southern Africa! This is their big problem. If they reform too much they risk losing control of the situation to the national liberation movement. If they don't reform, they also lose in the longer term. They are desperate to separate 'race' issues from 'class' issues. But they cannot succeed at present with this manoeuvre.

Isn't it strange then that the ultra-left should come with a similar tune? The ultra-left dismisses, or at best plays down, the question of national oppression. The ultra-left like the imperialists and big capitalists, insist that South Africa is basically a 'normal capitalist' country. In this way, they throw away our key card! In fact, when ultra-leftists say South Africa is just a normal capitalist country, they achieve in 'theory' what the bosses are so anxious, and yet so unable, to achieve in practice!

So, in the concrete conditions of South Africa, the

leading role of the working class is not to isolate itself in 'pure working class issues'. It is the task of this class to lead the struggle against the enemy on all fronts. This task includes leading the widest popular alliance of all oppressed and ex-democratic South Africans - the rural masses, the black petty bourgeoisie and middle strata, and all other genuine democrats.

This is the people's camp. This is our great collective strength. When we advance the slogan Forward to People's Power! It is this broad alliance under the leadership of the black working class that we have in mind. Let us now return to the main purpose of this article. How does what we have said differ from populism? Why is our strategy of a broad popular alliance not populist?

populism hides differences

In the first place, populism is an ideology that fails to understand (it often deliberately hides) the class and other differences within the broad ranks of the people. In the people's camp in South Africa there are common unifying interests, for instance, the common opposition to apartheid. But within this unity there are differences. A black shopkeeper may oppose apartheid mainly because of Group Areas and racist trading restrictions. A migrant worker may oppose apartheid mainly because of the pass laws and low wages. A black teacher may oppose it mainly because of gutter education. A white democrat may oppose apartheid for moral, ideological reasons.

These are just examples, things are not quite so simple in reality, of course. But these examples give us some

idea of the need to understand the differences within the unity of the people's camp.

In fact, in order to develop this unity we must have a clear, scientific understanding of these differences. This is what we mean when we speak of the need to understand the differences in our unity, and the unity in our differences. We must not expect to mobilise and organise all sectors of the people for exactly the same reasons. A black trader and a black worker may have different reasons for joining the same broad ranks of popular struggle.

This is the first major difference between our line and the line of populism. Populism speaks of the people as if the unity within the people's camp was based on completely the same interests.

Let us give an example. In South Africa, Africanist and Black Consciousness ideologists have often had strong populist tendencies. The claim that 'all Africans are socialists' or talk of a single 'African personality' or a single 'black consciousness' or 'black soul', are all varieties of populism.

These examples of populism all show an unscientific grasp of reality. While they correctly understand the need for a maximum unity in the people's camp, they have a vague understanding of the basis of that unity.

progressive and reactionary populism

Despite its populist weaknesses, it is important to note that an ideology like BC has played a broadly progressive role in South Africa. In particular in the 1970s, BC played a big role in mobilising tens of thousands of our youths. The majority of these youths have since gone beyond the limitations of BC.

But not all populism is broadly progressive. The case of Afrikaner Nationalism can be mentioned. This ideology also has a strong populist character. It speaks of a single 'people' (die volk), with its own 'special soul' and historical calling 'roeping'. In speaking of the volk, Afrikaner Nationalism hides the class differences between Afrikaans bosses, the petty bourgeoisie and workers. This brand of populism tends to be based on a very reactionary, racist idea of the superiority of the volk.

The fact that populism can be broadly progressive, or extremely reactionary is important to remember. Not all forms of populism must be handled in the same way. In its most reactionary forms, populism is an enemy ideology, and it must be treated as such. But those who hold a more progressive brand of populism must be educated and developed. Elements of their outlook can be built upon, and their understanding and practice can be made more scientific.

understanding workers' interests

Populism speaks about the people's camp as if there were no differences within it. But in practice it

often advances the interest of one group or class within that camp. It pushes these particular interests as if they were equally everyone's interest.

Let us take the example of BC in the 1970s. Using populism, BC ideologists spoke of a single 'Black Soul'. But in fact they concerned themselves mainly with issues of central concern to black intellectuals - culture, consciousness, etc. Their populism, their belief in a single 'black soul', blinded them to differences within the camp of the oppressed. In this way they often failed to address the issues of major concern to black workers, or to the rural masses. When such issues like passes or low wages were raised, they were not given enough importance.

populism downplays organisation

We have said that populism, even progressive populism, has an unscientific understanding of the unity of the people's camp. It tends to base this unity on 'consciousness' or on 'feelings'. For this reason populism often relies heavily on emotional mobilisation. It often downplays the task of solid organising. For the same reason populism also often relies on charismatic leaders - that is people who can sway the masses with fine speeches, but with very little content. Such 'leaders' often speak without organisational mandate. For them the possession of a black skin, for instance, or some 'special insight' into the 'black soul' is sufficient as a mandate.

While we must not forget the crucial importance of mobilising, and of strong fighting talk, the need for organisation and democratic participation must also not be omitted. If we are blind to the objective

differences within the people's camp, the task of solid organisation is impossible. Without a clear understanding of these differences we will not be able to organise the different classes and sectors into a united fighting force. We will also not be able to understand what is of major importance, and what is of secondary importance. Not all groups within the people's camp have the same potential.

conclusion

We have seen that to talk about 'the people' does not mean that one is populist. We are absolutely correct in our broad national democratic movement, to struggle for people's power, and to demand that the people shall govern.

But for this strategy to work we have to ensure that we do not ignore the objective differences within the unity of the broad people's camp. We must avoid both the dangers of ultra-leftism and of populism. Ultra-leftism speaks only of the working class and neglects the task of uniting the broadest popular unity in the national democratic struggle. Populism tends to neglect the crucial leading role of the working class within that popular unity.

questions for discussion

1. What do you understand by the idea of unity in difference?
2. Do you agree that the demand 'The People Shall Govern!' is not populist? Could you give this slogan both a populist and a non-populist meaning?

In future issues of ISIZWE we will look at other political concepts that are often used in our struggle. Many of these concepts are used in confusing ways. We plan to look at concepts like WORKERISM, VOLUNTARISM, NATIONALISM, SYNDICALISM, etc.

If there are other concepts you would like discussed, or if you are unclear or unhappy about what we have said so far, write to ISIZWE through your organisation or local UDF office.

national democratic struggle

The resistance of 1985 was not a new development in South African politics. In its slogans and demands, in its symbols and flags, and in its proclaiming of Nelson Mandela and the Freedom Charter, the 1985 resistance reflected an ongoing tradition of resistance in our land - the tradition of the national democratic struggle. The national democratic struggle unites all sections of the oppressed together with white democrats in the struggle to destroy apartheid and replace it with a democratic state. To understand why ours is a national democratic struggle, we must look at our society.

Our society is capitalist, and many argue that we will only be truly liberated by socialism. Why then are we fighting a national democratic struggle? The answer to this question lies in the type of capitalist society we have in South Africa. Remember there are (and have been) many different types of capitalist societies : Nazi Germany, 'democratic' America, Chile's military dictatorship, France under a 'socialist' government, etc. In each situation we would use different strategies to fight to remove capitalist exploitation. These strategies come from the concrete conditions of each society - what kind of state does

it have? Would a parliamentary strategy be possible? Who are the allies of the bourgeoisie. Who are the potential allies of the working class? Lets look at the concrete conditions in South Africa.

white ruling bloc and the oppressed

All black South Africans are oppressed. They are ruled by a white minority and a small group of black collaborators. The black oppressed majority have no political rights. At home, at work, at school, in all areas of their lives they feel the oppression of apartheid. Unemployment, low wages, high prices and high rents burden their lives. Lack of political rights means that people live all their lives with these problems. The African majority bear the heaviest national oppression. They are forced to carry passes, and always face the threat of being sent to starve in the 'homelands'. The fact that all black South Africans are oppressed by apartheid gives them all an interest in destroying it.

On the other hand, the system of apartheid has benefitted all white South Africans. All whites have a stake in the system. Although they have different ideas about how best to maintain the system, the white population is generally united behind some form of minority rule.

So in South Africa we generally have two political forces confronting each other : the oppressed black majority and the white ruling bloc.

This does not mean that all whites support apartheid

or that all blacks oppose it. The Carter Ebrahim's and Hendrickse's and Sebe's are proof that there is a small group of collaborators among the oppressed who have thrown in their lot with apartheid. On the other hand, there have always been a number of whites who have rejected apartheid and joined the people's struggle.

Recently this group has grown dramatically as more whites realise that there will never be peace under apartheid. But whites who reject minority rule are still a minority in the white community.

The white ruling bloc and the oppressed are not classes. They are composed of different classes with different interests. In the white ruling bloc we find big capitalists, small capitalists, small farmowners, middle strata and even a small group of workers, who have defined their interests with white minority rule. Among the oppressed we find workers, small peasants, traders and middle strata, but they face a common racial oppression. They share an interest in destroying apartheid and replacing it with a democracy.

understanding south african capitalism

National oppression (as outlined above) is a key aspect of South African capitalism. This is because capitalism was brought to our country by imperialism, the age when European capitalist countries were seeking to exploit the colonies to raise their profits. In Europe capitalism had not followed the same course. In France, for example, capitalism developed out of the revolutionary overthrow of the feudalists by the workers, serfs and bourgeoisie. A democratic state was established which gave everyone

the vote. This meant that socialists in France have been able to use parliament and elections as part of their strategy.

In South Africa it was different. Capitalism was brought by the colonialists. The colonialists have disrupted the lives of our people. Our people were forced off their land. They were charged taxes to force them to go work in the mines. They were denied any political rights. Our people fought back heroically, but they were eventually overcome by the guns of the colonialists. These were the conditions under which capitalism came to South Africa. It was imposed on our land as part of a system that was resisted by all black South Africans.

Capitalism did not bring democratic rights (as in France), because it was imposed against the will of the people. If they had been granted democratic rights, the people would have used them to throw out capitalism and the colonial system. Instead, capitalism consolidated the system of white minority rule. In 1910, the Union of South Africa was founded. It gave democratic rights to all whites, and excluded all blacks from any power. This unified the white ruling bloc. The system of white minority rule has remained basically unchanged since 1910. Blacks are still excluded from real political power. Capitalism developed the pass laws and the migrant labour system, to ensure cheap labour for high profits. Apartheid laws have hampered the workers and people of South Africa from uniting to challenge the bosses.

Capitalism in South Africa has been built on the foundations of national oppression and apartheid, and it still rests firmly on those foundations. This is why the national democratic struggle is the programme we follow in South Africa.

understanding the national democratic struggle

1. The national democratic struggle (NDS) is the struggle of all the oppressed people and white democrats to destroy minority rule and build a democratic state.
2. The NDS is a national struggle. This is not only because it is fought in all parts of our country, but because it unites South Africans across the divisions of apartheid. By bringing together all the oppressed people and white democrats to struggle for democracy, we are also building a new nation. The NDS tells us that we are a single nation, an African nation, and that we demand to govern our land.
3. The NDS is a struggle for democracy, for the right of the people to run this country. This means that political power must be in the hands of the people, and that all the country's resources must be in their hands. This idea is contained in the Freedom Charter which sets out the demands of the NDS: the Charter states that the people shall govern and share in the country's wealth, and that the land shall be shared among those who work it.

In the NDS we are fighting for democracy. The different classes among the oppressed may have different ideas on how much democracy we need. The working class will always fight for the fullest democracy, where the people control all aspects of their lives.

4. The NDS is not a civil rights struggle; it is a national liberation struggle. This means that we are not struggling for white minority rule to reform itself
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and meet some of the demands of the people. We are struggling to end the system of minority rule itself. We are struggling for the majority to decide the country's future - a right they have been denied since the colonial period began.

classes on the road to national liberation

It is very important that we recognise that all classes among the oppressed have an interest in the destruction of apartheid and white minority rule. Only a small and unrepresentative clique have gone into the tricamerals and community councils. At the same time, we must not forget that there are different classes with different interests among the oppressed. While they are united around the immediate task of destroying national oppression, their long-term interests are not identical. For example they do not all look to socialism as the solution to our problems. Nor are they all able to engage in the struggle in the same way.

The 1980 meat strike is an example: the black butchers supported the boycott by refusing to sell red meat. This showed their unity with the working class in the face of oppression - the white butchers certainly carried on selling red meat even though they come from the same class as black butchers. At the same time, the black butchers started selling meat again after a few weeks, while the boycott continued for more than two months. While standing together with the working class, the black butchers were not prepared to go beyond their long term class interests (butchers would go out of business if they refused to sell meat indefinitely). This does not make the butchers into traitors - it should however make us aware of some of their limitations.

The working class is the most dependable class in the struggle for national liberation, and this is why we say the working class must lead the struggle.

When we say the working class must lead the struggle, this does not mean that we try to drive all other interests out of the struggle. It is always important that we strengthen the liberation struggle by drawing in all sections of the oppressed. A very important part of working class leadership is that the working class should lead other sections of the oppressed.

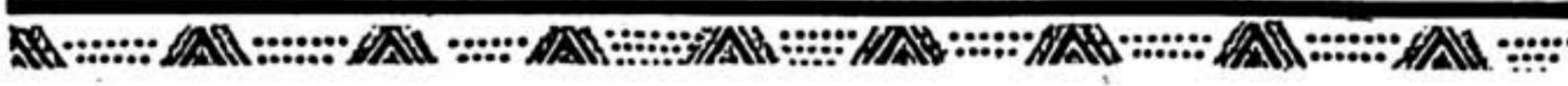
A good example of this principle is last year's tricameral election campaign. The regime was clearly trying to co-opt the Coloured and Indian middle class through Botha's reforms. We could have said that the middle class will be won over by the reforms, and the working class will have to fight alone. This would have allowed the state to gain an ally, while we would lose an ally. Instead we went out to counter the state's attempt to win over these elements; and we were successful. While Hendrickse, Rajbansi, etc. are certainly middle class blacks, the bulk of the black middle class rejected Botha's reforms and boycotted the elections. Botha's reforms have not really changed the system of national oppression, and the objective basis on which the black middle class is maintained.

The August 1984 elections are a good example of how the working class should set about leading other classes in the liberation struggle. It demonstrates how the working class must show these other classes that their interests lie with the national democratic struggle, not with apartheid reforms. This principle is also illustrated in the Freedom Charter - the demands of the liberation struggle. The Charter does not only contain demands of the working class. Nor does it contain only middle class demands. The Charter contains some demands specific to the middle class, some demands to the working class and some demands common to both.

In the liberation struggle the working class will fight for the fullest democracy, and that will enable the building of socialism. At present our most dangerous enemy remains the apartheid regime, and our most immediate task is to unite all the oppressed and the democratic whites in the liberation struggle.

questions for discussion

1. Are black collaborators acting in the interests of the black middle class, or are they betraying those interests?
 2. Do you think capitalism could survive in South Africa without apartheid?
 3. How does the Freedom Charter express the interests of the different classes in the liberation struggle?
-



**“ya, the community
is the main source, of
power . . .”**

interviews

To learn from comrades in the Eastern Cape about their experience of building people's power and controlling crime, ISIZWE conducted interviews. Here are the views of two comrades, the first from Uitenhage, and the second from Port Elizabeth.

Question: Comrade, please can you tell us how are area committees elected?

Answer: We start at the street level. People gather themselves from the street and hold a meeting where they will decide. They elect their committee of ten people. Above that street level, the two townships (Kwanobuhle and Langa) are zoned into five areas each. Each area committee has ten members elected from street committees. There is also a committee co-ordinating all ten areas.

But the apartheid system is trying very hard to demolish the area committees.

Question: They know all about it?

Answer: Yes.....they wanted to know and harass and detain people involved in area committees. They ask all about this thing, and they threatened people saying 'No this is indeed a communist orientation.

Question: What is the main role of the area committee?

Answer: It involves a political and social role in controlling and reducing crime. It's also where they discuss day-to-day problems of people. It's where even their organisations are able to get a mandate from the people - through the area committees.

Question: Area committees then go back to each street?

Answer: Yes. But they hold meetings under difficult conditions because the army and the hippos and casspirs are moving around trying to find out where the meetings are being held. That's a problem.

Question: You say area committees control crime. Can you give an example?

Answer: They are not trying to imitate the white courts, or trying to beat people No such thing. They are there to create peace among people. If there is something going to happen they call the people involved together and try to end it. The dangerous crime where people kill another

person, it's out of our hands.

Question: What cases are dealt with, then?

Answer: For instance a theft. If one steals a thing, if you can solve that, to have the thing returned back to the owner, you try. You talk to the one who steals. Also, even disputes of divorce. We try to involve relatives of both parties so that they can come together to find a solution. In cases of assault, we call those people involved, and try to talk them into paying medical fees for the assault. We tend to have success, and get a chance now to educate people about our cause.

Question: What do you say to such people?

Answer: We say that fighting each other, like doing harm to each other, the oppressed people, it doesn't help. The major thing people must concentrate on fighting the apartheid system. So people must give their attention straight to the oppressive system. Some people are individualistic. So we're trying hard with these people to show them the right way. And now, with these area committee structures the crime rate is down - very, very down.

Question: Was there a lot of crime before?

Answer: Before a lot.

Question: What sort of crimes before?

Answer: It was a lot of stabbing. Now there is much less. After a month of the area committees being formed, we got a report that there were two week-ends without any case of people being stabbed or assaulted.

It is true that the rate of alcohol is still very high. But we try even to organise the shebeeners. We have a specific time, at 9 o'clock they must be closed. They abide by that.

Question: Does the area committee operate like a court sometimes, or like a police force? Can you compare it with any of those?

Answer: You see, there are those called amabutho. They call themselves the police or army of the people. For instance, amabutho are the ones to avail themselves to patrol, when to check that the shebeeners are closed at 9 o'clock. That thing helped, because the owners of shebeens don't need to be told now. They know it is their responsibility to prevent crime from their place.

Question: If there are fights, do the amabutho go and check?

Answer: Yes.

Question: What do they do?

Answer: The only thing they do is separate the people. The kind of thing we emphasise to them is that we don't want people to be beaten up. But it has happened sometimes. For instance, I found one youth was being beaten up by the amabutho because he tried to enter the house of his girl friend. The girl's mother reported him to the amabutho, who gave him lashes. I personally went to the amabutho and told them, 'Look we must not do that. And how you do the same to the people, as the police do. The people will strike you off from the member-

ship of the organisations of the people. If people decide on that, you will be aware that you are not doing this violence as part and parcel of the organisation. You are doing violence without a mandate.

We are fighting for the liberation of our people. We must not ill-treat them. If we do something which is misconduct over them, they will run away from us. I told the amabutho this very important thing. We must get people to support us 100 percent. We don't need 99 percent. We want 100 percent. We must show the world the apartheid government stands alone.

Question: How is the amabutho composed? Is it youth?

Answer: Yes it is the youth. The amabutho are people who volunteer, as soldiers of the people, and you find they have a pride for that.

Question: Do you politicise the amabutho?

Answer: Yes, we have to tell them about the past of the struggle, the history. We teach them you can't achieve anything without discipline.

Generally, ya, I can say the community is the main source of power, because the state has really lost the control over the people. He has no power over the people in terms of controlling them. This is why the people have formed these area committees, so that they can try to control themselves. What has been preached in the past about the Freedom Charter, even now we are trying to do that practically.

Question: Do the people know the Freedom Charter quite well in the townships of Uitenhage?

Answer: They know the Freedom Charter, but especially the first clause, 'The People Shall Govern'.....

When ISIZWE spoke to comrades from Port Elizabeth townships, we found that there was a similar system of crime control in operation.

Question: To what extent are the SAP involved in controlling crime?

Answer: All crimes are taken initially to the area committees. People don't want to be seen to be collaborating or informing the police before the area committees have been informed. Each case is weighed. Hardened criminals who constantly attack and rob people will be sent to the police. Or at least, the offended party will be told to report it to the police if they want to. Minor cases are dealt with by the people involved themselves.

Question: Do people see a political dimension to this?

Answer: Yes. In most areas there is a great demand for membership cards of organisation. There is a great deal of confidence in the organisations. Since the release from detention of the leadership in September last year, there has been a general appreciation of the organisational control and direction of the situation, after the previous situation of chaos.

In some areas, 'Kangaroo courts' were formed while our leadership in PE were still in detention. These courts were organised on an ad hoc basis, they were

not organisationally controlled. They were not under the discipline of the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organisation (PEBCO), or of the Youth Congress (PEYCO). They were formed by groups of individual amabutho. In some cases these courts did use violence, especially beatings, to punish people. This was changed after the leadership were released. These structures were replaced with more disciplined structures. Before this, the amabutho sometimes acted in their own interests, for instance fining people, but having no political direction. The UDF dissociated itself from these 'Kangaroo courts'.

Question: What are the problems still confronting area committees in the control of anti-social behaviour?

Answer: There is a process of trying to clarify what sort of cases the area committees should be involved in. They are reluctant to be involved in family disputes, for instance.

Another problem is that sometimes people are reluctant to go to their area committee, and only want to take their problems to the senior leadership in Port Elizabeth.

People who go straight to the leadership are referred back to the area committee in their own area. Another similar problem is that people who are unhappy with their own area committee's decision, will report it to another area, or invite the amabutho from another area to come and sort it out.

We have got the amabutho now to understand that they cannot go and take decisions or act in other areas. They are now careful not to be exploited in this way.



mandela - the struggle is my life

The release of Comrade Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela is almost certain to happen in the near future. Over 20 years ago, when the government sentenced Mandela to life imprisonment they thought he would be forgotten by the people of South Africa, and by the world. Unfortunately for the apartheid jailers, their evil hopes have not been realised. Today PW Botha and his government are, in fact, desperate to find some easy way to release Mandela. This is not as a result of any charity on the apartheid regime's part. On the contrary, it is because of the massive pressure within and outside South Africa.

In order to understand the great significance of Mandela's probable release, it is necessary to look at what it is that Mandela symbolises.

Great liberation struggles are often closely associated with the names of outstanding leaders - George Washington, Ho Chi Minh, or Fidel Castro, for instance. Leaders like these come to symbolise in their persons the unity of purpose, the courage, discipline

and defiance of millions of fighters for liberation in their respective countries. In the case of the South African liberation struggle, there are many important names that we honour, men and women, heroes like Albert Luthuli and Dora Temana, martyrs like Johannes Nkosi and Solomon Mahlangu. But there is one name, more than any other, that has come to symbolise our great struggle, both inside our country and all over the world. That name is, of course, NELSON ROLIHLEHLA MANDELA. There are many things for which he stands.

symbol of an unbroken tradition

At the beginning of the 1960s, when the apartheid government cast Mandela into jail, when they banned the ANC, and arrested tens of thousands of patriotic South Africans, the regime thought they had smashed the people's resistance forever. They thought that the long traditions of militant struggle would be forgotten for all time. It is true that our struggle was dealt very heavy blows at this time.

But the fact that Mandela's name is now in the news headlines around the world, that he is spoken of with admiration in every township of our land, shows that the government's evil dreams have come to nothing. In our struggle we have survived the bleak years of the late 1960s and early 1970s. We have proved that our traditions of struggle are unbreakable.

The re-emergence of Mandela's name marks the resurgence of our traditions of struggle.

Nelson Mandela went to jail as a leader of the ANC. Founded in 1912, the ANC is the oldest modern national liberation movement on the African

continent. It has now been in the field of struggle for nearly 74 fighting years.

But Mandela's roots, like our own struggle, go back further than 1912. In his 1964 statement, while on trial for his life, Mandela told the court about his youth in the Transkei. As a young boy he had listened to the elders of his tribe telling the stories of the old days. Among the tales that moved him were those about the wars fought by our ancestors in defence of the land against the robbery of the colonialists. The elders spoke not just of their own Xhosa heroes, but of all the fighting heroes of southern Africa. The names of Dingane and Bambata, Hintsa and Makana, Squngthi and Dalasile, Moshoeshoe and Sekhukhuni, were all praised for bringing glory to the whole African people. The young Mandela was greatly inspired by these stories. Hearing these accounts made him wish to serve his people and make his own contribution to the ongoing struggle against oppression in our land. Looking back to his childhood, Mandela told the court that the heroes of the past were a great motivation for all his actions.

In the 1940s and 1950s, right up till his arrest in 1962 Mandela came to be actively involved in every component of the liberation struggle. He was an organiser in the development of mass-based democratic organisations, he was a diplomat in the service of the movement in his famous trip through Africa, he was an underground cadre, and he was a soldier-leader in the National High Command of Umkhonto we Sizwe.

The struggles in which we are engaged in the 1980s are not new struggles. In the 1940s, 1950s and early 1960s Mandela was actively associated with the students struggle against bantu education, and with the struggle against passes.

Just as we have opposed the 'new' constitution of 1984, so Mandela went to jail for his leading role in the mass campaign and national stayaway against the 'new' racist constitution of 1961. At this very moment, when comrades in many areas are building organs of people's power, street by street, we remember it was Mandela who first proposed such a plan, the 'M' Plan, in 1953.

In the first place, then, Mandela symbolises our great unbroken traditions of struggle.

symbol of national unity

The white 'leaders' of South Africa have always only enjoyed the support of a tiny minority of South Africa's people. These minority leaders have attempted to create other, 'viable' (i.e. tame) black leaders - like Buthelezi, Hendrickse and Rajbansi. But these puppets are merely figures of division and disunity.

Mandela stands above all tribal and racial divisions. He is recognised by an overwhelming majority of South Africans as their national leader. Even a growing number of whites see in Mandela the hope for peace and security in our land. These are not empty claims, the apartheid government's own public opinion surveys have had to recognise Mandela's overwhelming support.

The leadership of Mandela symbolises our demand for majority rule in an undivided, non-racial South Africa. Just before the end of the Rivonia Trial, knowing that the white court could sentence him to death, Mandela refused to renounce his basic principles:

Mandela was rooted in our majority African traditions of struggle against white domination. But Mandela also always fought against replacing white domination with simple black domination. It was a democratic, free and non-racial South Africa that he stood for, in which all South Africans could live together in harmony as equals. The whole courtroom was silent, you could hear a pin drop, when Mandela had outlined his ideals. It was clear that he had lived for these things, and wanted to go on fighting. But it was also clear that, if necessary, he was prepared to die for his ideals.

symbol of unity within the ranks

Mandela's own political development drew heavily upon the two main streams within our liberation struggle. An African patriot, as a young man a militant nationalist, he came also to be deeply influenced by older African comrades, like J.B. Marks and Moses Kotane, who were socialists and rooted in the trade union struggles. In his court speech Mandela reflected upon these two major influences on his outlook.

Mandela was attracted by the idea of a classless society. This ideal was partly a result of the Marxist books he had read. But it was also rooted in his admiration for the structures and organisation of early African societies in South Africa. In the days before colonialism, the land belonged to the whole tribe. There were no rich or poor, and there was no exploitation.

It is this depth and combination of traditions, endorsed by Mandela, that lies at the very heart of our national liberation struggle. In the 1950s, and now again in the

1980s it is the combination of the national liberation struggle and the workers' class struggle that has always produced the most militant and most sustained struggles.

symbol of a new society

Ours is not a struggle for civil rights. We do not struggle for a few more crumbs, a few more concessions within the structures of apartheid South Africa. We are struggling to bring about a new South Africa, in which the people shall govern.

In and through struggle that new South Africa is being built. The present crisis of the apartheid government is not a crisis that can be resolved by reforms. No adjustments from above ; imposed over the heads or behind the backs of our people, can work. White minority rule that goes back to the colonial occupation of our land, that was confirmed in the 1910 Union Constitution, and that was intensified after the 1948 election of the NP - this minority rule has now run its course. It is in a cul de sac, a straat loop dood. Only a completely new order can solve the problems of our land. Mandela symbolises this new society, he symbolises the only way forward, and even PW Botha knows this. As one British newspaper put it: "Botha has become Mandela's prisoner".

leader of the people, servant of the people

Mandela has always seen himself as a servant of the struggling people of South Africa, not as a

free-floating individual. He has consistently refused to place his own individual liberty over and above the freedom of all oppressed South Africans. At the beginning of 1985, when Mandela refused to accept Botha's offer of a conditional release it was made clear that he would not and could not give any undertaking at a time when both he himself, and the majority of South Africans were not free. He linked his own freedom with the freedom of all the people.

They offered him freedom in the Transkei. They offered him freedom if he 'renounced violence'. They offered him freedom in exile. They even offered him a 'cooling off' period in Lusaka. Mandela has remained unshakable in his principles. He has even insisted that all his comrades in prison be freed before him.

Mandela is a remarkable person, but he is not just an individual. The heroism of Mandela reflects the great heroism of our people. The maturity, the political depth and steadfastness of Mandela reflects the maturity and depth of experience of our traditions of resistance.

It is OUR struggle that has forged a leader of the great calibre of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela.

It is OUR struggle that will liberate him from prison.

philippines - shuffles at the top

Nothing brings down dictators quicker than their backers getting cold feet. If anything, recent events in the Philippines have shown just how true this is, and how much influence the US imperialism, has over politics in its client states. In the space of a month, the Philippines have seen a fraudulent election, the installation of two presidents at the same time, a revolt in the army and then the resignation of a dictator who could not even trust his own generals. To cap it all Ferdinand Marcos was replaced by Cory Aquino, widow of a liberal politician and member of one of the most wealthy families. She has no political program nor any political experience.

Before Marcos fled the country politics was relatively easy for Cory Aquino - all she had to do was attack the dictatorship and smile at the television cameras.

Reconciling the strategic interests of the US with the desires of the Philippino people for real independence may prove to be a far more difficult task.

The importance of the Philippines to the US is undeniable. For more than forty years the Philippines

were a colony of the United States. After World War the Philippines gained formal independence, but not much more. Today the largest US airforce and navy bases outside the United States are in the Philippines. Apart from the Marcos and the Aquino family fortune almost the entire economy is controlled by US corporations. Since he came to power in the 1960s Marcos was backed by the US.

For the US, the elections were like no other in the third world. Over one thousand American journalists covered the campaign. For two weeks the television coverage in the US made it seem as if it was the American people who were going to vote, instead of those in the Philippines. Marcos first announced the election on US television, and it was only announced back home the next day. By calling the elections Marcos was buying time from the US in a last attempt to prove that he could still control and govern the country.

These elections, and the eventual flight of Marcos have been presented in most South African commercial newspapers as a 'victory for democracy'. Things are, however, not that simple. In fact, the major democratic opposition groups in the Philippines did not even participate in the elections.

The largest legal opposition party is Bayan (the New Patriotic Alliance) which has over one million members. Bayan has been at the forefront of the mass mobilisation and organisation of the past 5 years in which millions of people opposed the government.

At the same time the banned National Democratic Front, and its military wing, the New People's Army have won massive victories in the rural areas. The NPA has doubled in size in the past three years and now has 20 000 combatants and over 1 million active

supporters. Low morale and corruption in the government army has allowed the NPA to defeat them in many battles.

Both Bayan and the National Democratic Front have called for the removal of the US bases, the redistribution of wealth and the establishment of a people's government free from US control. It is the strength of popular support for these demands that has made the US scared. Even large sections of the church and the middle classes had come to support Bayan and the NDF.

Because of this the US saw Aquino as a defence against the Philippino people. Aquino, while opposed to Marcos and his corruption, has said that she will not negotiate with the 'illegal' opposition until they stop the armed struggle, and that the US bases will remain. At the same time she has released political prisoners and says she will make the army more efficient and will stop corruption in the government.

In many ways the new government is only a change at the top. The demands of the people have not been met. Aquino has the support of the United States and history has shown that the interests of the Philippino people and of US imperialism are very different.



they said it . . .

"The ANC and the UDF had taken control of 27 townships in the Eastern Cape and their influence was spreading to other parts of the country, Mr Koos Van der Merwe (Conservative Party, Jeppe) said yesterday.

"His information came from 'reliable sources'. The government should resign as it had lost control of South Africa, he added".

(Cape Times 5/2/86)

"South Africa was absolutely determined to restore law and order to stabilise the country, the Minister of Law and Order, Mr Louis Le Grange warned yesterday.

"Any efforts to erect alternative structures would not be tolerated.

" 'Our enemies cannot be allowed to create the impression that they are capable of maintaining their own administration. The State's power and institutions must be protected and maintained,' Mr Le Grange said".

(The Citizen 19/2/86)
