

# A.N.C. Guidelines

The A.N.C introduced its own grand plan for a new South Africa in October '88 in the form of its constitutional guidelines. This follows on their "preconditions" for negotiation with the South African government in 1987. During this period, a cross section of organisations and groups from S.A. have trekked to Lusaka for talks with the ANC. The list includes Cosatu and members of the "Mass Democratic Movement", IDASA, DP members, big business and some delegations even included members or supporters of the Ruling Nationalist Party.

On the homefront the situation has been one of continued repression. The state of emergency is extended, organisations and individuals restricted and the Labour Relations Admentment Act has come into effect. The question that begs an answer is why have these guidelines been unveiled against this backdrop. From some quarters it is argued that the working - class needs a respite from the present oppressive measures, and a way of achieving this is to enter into dicussion with a range of organisations - including those who are engaged in parliamentary politics. The purpose of this is to pressurise for a negotiated settlement. The preconditions for negotiations and the constitutional guidelines clearly indicates that the A.N.C is on this course.

To an extent the strategy seems to be working. Big business, the DP, Labour Party and Inkatha amongst other groups - are calling for the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners ( one of the A.N.C preconditions for



negotiations) and are presuring for talks with the A.N.C. They have all showed varying degrees of enthusiasm about the constitutional guidelines - as the beginning of a new era in South African politics. Most also applauded the PW - Mandela meeting as a step in the right direction.

What do the guidelines mean for the working class? None of the clauses even suggest an end to the exploitation of labour and a restructuring of society that will benefit all. Instead it calls for the participation in a capitalist state on the terms

of the capitalists. Some of the main clauses for workers are:

**1. We shall have a mixed economy with a public sector, a co - operative sector, and a small scale family sector.**

A " mixed economy" may sound like a good compromise between (two) opposing class force. Yet most capitalist countries , some more than others have a mixed economy. Britain has a mixed economy, so does South Africa at present .In South Africa some companies are not owned by private capitalists, but by the



state, examples are SATS, ISKOR and ARMSKOR . As we know, this does not mean that workers control these companies. Even if workers genuinely controlled in some companies, there will be immense problems.

Let us look at examples- If some of the economy was "Socialist" and some of it "Capitalist" it would mean, for example, that OK Bazaars and Checkers would be run by democratically elected workers' committees which would decide on wages, what to keep in stock and what to do with profits. Meanwhile Pick 'n Pay and Metro would remain in the hands of capitalists who would continue to exploit those workers and pay them less than a living wage.

It would mean that half the mines in South Africa would be taken over by workers and the other half would still be happily in the control of the chamber of mines, or half the metal factories would be taken over by the metalworkers and the rest owned by Anglo American. Could such a situation last? Would the workers who are still exploited not call on their comrades who have already got control over their workplace for support in their struggle against the bosses? Would these workers not also want to take control like the workers in the socialist 'half' of the economy? And would the bosses sit back and allow the revolutionary example of worker-owned shops, mines and factories to continue with all that wealth out of their reach? Definitely not!

.Given the resources of the capitalist at present, Bosses will be in complete control of a "mixed economy" on the basis of supply and demand, and continued capital accumulation. The working class demand remains, complete control of the means of production, distribution and exchange and not a "section of the economy" as suggested, as this will only lead to a total reclaiming of the economy by the capitalists in the long term.

which help the capitalists to continue to exploit workers. Workers through their struggles have already

won the right to strike, despite the state of emergency and attacks by the state. Workers do not need to be "given" this right by anyone

### Conclusion

So we see that these guidelines are not guidelines for the working class,,



2. " A charter protecting worker's Trade union rights, especially the right to strike, and collective bargaining shall be incorporated into the constitution."

In 1979 black workers gained the right to legally form trade unions, as well as the right to strike. We have seen what this has meant for workers. It has not stopped the bosses from firing and victimising workers. There are still many legal controls over strikes

**SOCIALISM CANNOT BE NEGOTIATED** because the bosses are not going to be talked into kindly giving away their companies to their workers, and their police and army are not going to be talked into quietly going away to look for jobs so that they can be replaced by a workers police and army.

But we should not be surprised that the A.N.C is proposing a capitalist future for S.A. The A.N.C has never

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claimed to be a socialist party and has made a big effort to reassure imperialism and South African capitalists that they can save capitalism for them from a workers revolution. That is what they are telling the groups of liberals who are visiting them in Harare, Lusaka and London. That is also why countries like Russia and Western capitalism like Britain and America are in such a hurry for a so - called "negotiated settlement". This is what Oliver Tambo told the British capitalists in 1985 when they asked him if the A.N.C planned to destroy capitalism:

" No we do not want to destroy it. The Freedom Charter does not even propose to want to destroy the capitalist system. All the

Freedom Charter does is to envisage a mixed economy in which part of the economy, some of the

industries, would be controlled, owned by the state (as happens in many countries) and the rest by private ownership - a mixed economy."

We need our own guide to action, a **SOCIALIST PROGRAMME OF ACTION** and our own **METHODS OF STRUGGLE** - mass meeting, bold slogans, strikes, demonstrations etc. But all our criticism of populism is useless, unless they take an organised form. To carry our struggle forward we need our own leadership and not just in our own union.

We need to unite socialist workers in all unions as well as outside the unions.



## Communist Party Members Reinstated.

In 1937 three members of the Communist Party of South Africa were charged with "counter revolutionary" activity and called Trotskyites. These comrades went to Russia to argue their case. Here, two of them were executed in 1938 and the third sent to a labour camp where he died in 1941. The two who were executed were cde P Richter and cde M Richter. Cde Lazar

Bach was reported to have died in a labour camp of "natural causes". Today the Soviet authorities say the executions and the banishment to a labour camp was a mistake. They say it was as a result of false evidence extracted from them.

The South African Communist Party, at its 7th congress earlier this year, agreed with the Soviet authorities and decided to reinstate the three as members of the SACP.

This sad incident exposes the brutal, undemocratic nature of Stalinism. It does not help these comrades to be reinstated in their death. Like them thousands of genuine socialists throughout

the world were slandered and murdered by these Stalinists. What is worse, is that these murders were committed in the name of Socialism! We want to know how the "false evidence" was extracted! If those who were responsible, as well as their heirs, want to come clean, they must tell us.

Was it really natural causes that cde Lazar died of, three years after his arrest? The South African regime also

claimed that a number of political prisoners have died of "natural causes", but we have our suspicions.

We are encouraged by the SACP's self criticism, even if it is over 50 years after the incident and even if they still haven't provided all the facts. The lesson must be learnt, history will catch up with those inside or outside the liberation movement who use undemocratic methods in their work.

# OUR STRUGGLE CONTINUES!