

## Struggle for unity

**The National Question** involves the solution of national contradictions, the resolution of the problems of oppression of one nation by another, and the form that the future nation should take.

**The Social Question** is the resolution of social contradictions which have as their base the prevailing mode of production and production relationships which mould and condition social relations.

Briefly put, the National Question investigates oppression and the Social Question investigates exploitation — oppression and exploitation were married in the temple of imperialism.

The designations "tribe" "nationality" and "nation" are transient historical social group forms. At the root of their definition lies the community of economic life that binds together members of each transient social form. Language, territory, mores, national consciousness are simply ethnic features of a nationality/nation.

For example, in a capitalist society the community of economic life for the bourgeoisie consists in the fact that they own the means of production and the wealth so produced at the expense of the producers i.e. the working class.

The community of economic life for the working class consists in the fact that it does not own the means to produce wealth but has to make do with a wage. It should be pointed out that there are points in the development of society where tribes develop into nationalities and nationalities develop into nations but these points are never easy to specify: suffice it to say that the old (nationality) is the new (nation) in embryo.



Stalin offers the following definition of a nation:

*A nation is a historically evolved stable community of people based on community of language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture.*

History contains numerous examples of long-established boundaries of countries being changed and of inhabitants of countries refusing morally to accept the nationality imposed by a country. **Stalin's definition is dogmatic, restrictive and rigid.** The nation is not simply a collection of abstract, external criteria. In fact, political philosophers have sought in vain to find an objective definition of a nation. The subjective element i.e. the consciousness of a national identity, a national political movement, is no less important. It is not a doctrinaire expert armed with a list of "objective criteria" who will determine whether a community constitutes a nation or not, **but the community itself.**

The popular expression of bourgeois ideology today is "human liberty, human rights . . . regardless of race, colour or creed . . . under a free modern democracy" etc. Only the bourgeoisie enjoy these "universal" freedoms but it is cautious enough to be discreet, hence one is constantly reminded of the "universality" to the point of indoctrination. So it is that bourgeois ideology **has developed the slogans of democracy and the right of self-determination.** Even in South Africa with outrageous comedy, the caretakers of colonialism speak of national self-determination in the bantustans. Things have certainly changed since Treitschke wrote (nineteenth century)

that "A negro tribe must be chastised by setting its villages on fire, because that is the only remedy which is effective."!

There is nothing wrong in using the terminology of "democracy" and "national self-determination" if one understands them in their revolutionary senses. **A struggle for full democratic rights must be linked to a socialist revolution.** Victorious socialism must practise the fullest democracy.

In its hunt for superprofits imperialism dispossessed the aborigines (indigenous owners of the land) as a people. The consequence, whether in Australia, Japan or Palestine was to pit Black against white. Dispossession led to the super-exploitation of Black people. For the colonial world, race determined class: whites were the privileged group and blacks the underdogs. Exploitation is here directed against a phenotypically distinct and identifiable people, leading to elaborate political-administrative structures to keep them subject. This coupled with European chauvinism leads to the relentless oppression of the subject-people.

To speak of Azania before the advent of settler-colonialism is somewhat misleading because the present borders are of recent historical origin and were drawn up by settler-colonialism. We do not have reliable sources of information and have to make do with rather rudimentary information. We may say that pre-colonial Azania was inhabited by people whose mode of production had not gone beyond the primitive communal stage. All in all these economies had only achieved private property in the ownership of stock



but not of land. Social relations were not at all as antagonistic as we know them to have been in Europe. At the advent of settler-colonialism in Azania, tribes were just moving towards the formation of nationalities.

The Dutch were the first to send a garrison of men to the Cape in 1652. The White settlers launched many wars of aggression in order to gain land, livestock, grain and slave labour from the black people.

British capitalism subsequently began entrenching itself in South Africa and it was evidently incompatible with the backward feudalism of the Dutch. The white settlers allied themselves against blacks, but continued to wage wars against each other simultaneously.

We must pause here and look at the *modus operandi* of imperialism's most far-sighted ideologist, the Christian missionary. The missionary first approaches the chief humbly, Bible in hand, and asks for a small piece of land to set up his mission station. At his heels hastens the trader, the purveyor of small goods. The Bible and the bale of Lancashire cotton become the invidious seeds of devastation of the black way of life. An "agreement" follows between the chief and the Governor whereby the British become the "friend and protector" of the chief. There follows war and looting by the British leading to a "treaty" in which the chief agrees (sic) to a large piece of land belonging to his tribe. In return he receives a magistrate and a now-arrogant missionary. Other mission stations are set up and in their train come more traders. The invaded tribes are split asunder: "divide and rule" under the capable hands of the missionaries is fatally disruptive. In the "confiscated territory" the land

is shared between Boer and British. When the hungry black people try to retrieve their plundered cattle, the settler-thieves accuse them of cattle-theft and send out troops to destroy sleeping villages. Gunpowder, fire and famine are the order of the day. The farmers who have stolen the land cry out for labour: they obtain it from the plundered. When the Dutch grab the land, the British "find themselves compelled" to protect the "Natives"! Hypocrisy is a wonderful Western trait!

Dr Phillip, the Superintendent of the London Missionary Society, clearly states in **Researches in South Africa:**

*While our missionaries are everywhere scattering the seeds of civilization ... they are extending British interests, British influences and the British Empire ... Wherever the missionary places his standard among a savage tribe, their prejudices against the colonial government give way, their dependence upon the colony is increased by the creation of artificial wants ... Industry, trade and agriculture spring up.*

Dr Phillip did this work amongst the Xhosa, Revs Kitchener and Edwards amongst the Abathwa, Revs Read and va Kemp amongst the Khoikhoi, Moffat among the Tswanas and Rev Owen among the Zulus. Liberalism served the British empire well and its first apostles in Azania were the missionaries. Phillip *supra* clearly states that the transition from tribalism to capitalism must be engendered by the missionary. The Christian convert will want to dress, eat and otherwise act like his teacher.

And note this classic piece of advice from Phillip in the face of Maqoma's complaint about the governor's treat-

ment of his people:

*If they (the soldiers) drive away your people at the point of the bayonet, advise them to go over the Kieskamma peaceably. If they come and take away your cattle, suffer them to do it without resistance. If they burn your huts, allow them to do so ... and I am convinced you will have no occasion to repent of having followed my advice.*

The christianization and "emancipation" of the colonial slave had nothing to do with liberating him but on the contrary had everything to do with subjugating him. There was no milk of human kindness animating the heart of the missionary: the glory of God meant the profit of England.

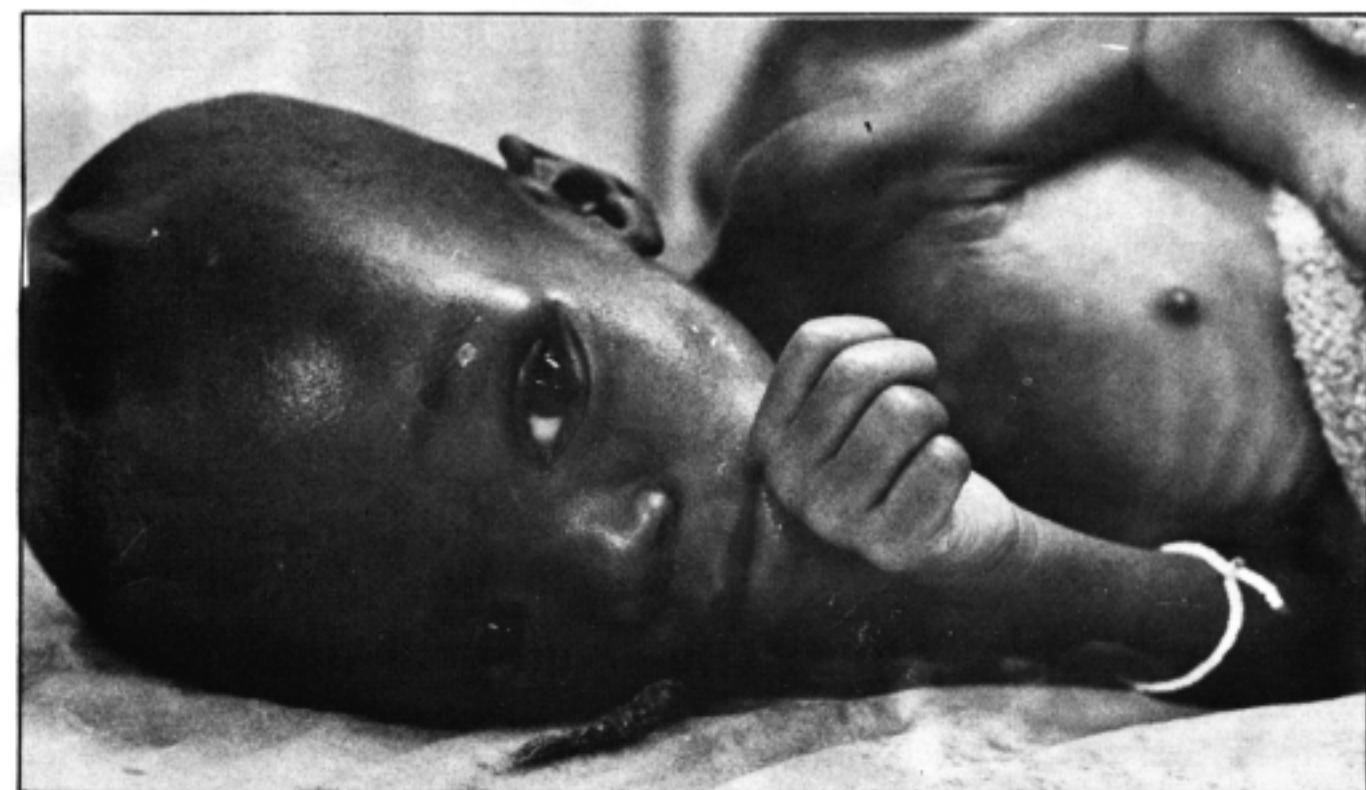
The Zulu nationality under Shaka saw a need for black unity. Shaka set out to forge unity by force. Thus left in its wake a destruction that boggles the imagination. Society was in a state of agonizing flux.

The missionary's station comprised a church, a trading store and fields for cultivation. Blacks began producing for personal consumption: the black peasant's way of life revolved around producing for the market. His sense of spatial belonging transcended the limited tribal world as he worried about the disruptive effects of war to his trade with distant Cape Town, say. His whole frame of reference geared him towards paying allegiance to an as yet ill-defined territorial entity. The tribe had grown into the nationality.

We see that imperialism manifested itself in Azania in its worst form viz settler-colonialism. Not content with the appropriation of raw materials, their processing in its own industries and its eventual sale to the subject nation at exorbitant prices, imperialism took over occupancy, possession and ownership of the land.

In fact, this was absolutely necessary for imperialism to survive. Plainly the colonizers were white and the colonized were black: the blacks naturally seek to redress their historical grievances and thus a primary goal of struggle in Azania is repossession of the land.

Control of the Azanian masses was achieved by military invasion, by the imposition of taxes, by the institution of fixed tenure, by laws providing for the disarming of black people, by pass laws. Only the white settlers are regarded as citizens of South Africa. We come to a crucial point: the gran-



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ting of independence to the colony meant no actual change to the social order. Britain simply relieved herself of the administrative duties of the colony, allowing the settlers to be their own administrators. Britain would no longer send administrators to SA: instead, she would send capital for investment. Many other British colonies eg Nigeria were granted "independence" but remained neo-colonies. There was only a change of face where the darker hued became caretakers of colonialism. After 1910 white settlers still maintained their privilege as **colonial masters**. The "Republic of SA" declared in 1961 further froze this position: blacks were and are still excluded as citizens.

One must here note that the settler regime deliberately attempts to distort history by saying that the arrival of blacks in SA coincided with the arrival of the Dutch (in fact blacks arrived at least eight centuries before!) and by calling the people all sorts of derogatory names eg Bantu (people), "Bushmen" and/or "Hottentots" while referring to themselves as the "afrikaners" i.e. Africans (this deliberate terminology is meant to suggest that the settlers own the land and that the black people are immigrants).

The "legalized" UDI that was the Act of Union was inspired by the Bambata Rebellion. The last war of resistance (1906) spurred the imperialists into uniting the settlers. Bambata said "the African people lost the land on the battlefield and can only regain it on the battlefield."

The 1910 Act, then, served to seal the partnership of Boer and Briton and is a vestige of colonialism. It consolidated the dispossession of the black people politically (and formally extended the dispossessed to include the so-called Indian). Note that even by English common law principles (*nemo dat quod non habet*) this "transfer of land" to the Anglo-Boers was invalid.: armed robbers cannot have a valid title to other robbers.

Colonialism also further balkanized Azania by creating the "protectorates" of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. Note well that these people actually asked the British to protect them from the boers! The colonial consolidation programme was completed by "benevolent" Britain without the need to fire a single bullet.

We may argue that the so-called Xhosas, Sothos, Coloureds, Indians, Tswanas etc., because of their

landlessness and structured propertylessness, constitute a single black nationality i.e. nation in embryo. The repossession of land and the consequent seizure of political power is an absolute necessity for the achievement of nationhood in the specific conditions of Azania. Note that the achievement of political power does **not** necessarily mean the achievement of nationhood. Zambia, Uganda etc have gained political independence long before the process of nation-building reached maturity. The acquisition of state power should speed up unity and identification with a clearly defined territorial entity.

BC has long emphasized the National Question. The records in **S v COOPER & OTHERS** at page 61 quotes a resolution proposed by Tiro in 1973 which says:

*That this GSC noting that SASO's policy with regard to ownership and political character of this country can be exploited by our enemies for their own ends.*

*Therefore wishes to explicitly state that: this country belongs to Black people and to them alone. Whites will live in or leave this country on terms laid down by Blacks and on condition that they respect the Black people.*

*This should not be construed as anti-whitism: it only means that in as much as Black people live in Europe on terms laid down by Europeans, whites shall be subjected to the same conditions.*

*We further wish to state that in our operation we shall always be pro-Black.*

The BC Movement has consistently opposed the balkanization of Azania into bantustans. In doing this the ruling class is attempting to impose its idea of who or what constitutes the NATION. To say that there are various 'national groups' in South Africa (multi-nationalism, multi-racialism or non-racialism) is to propagate the same ruling class idea. BC, by contrast, has long employed the banner slogan **ONE AZANIA, ONE NATION**. The BC Movement asserts that Black nationalism is the driving force of the struggle.

BC asserts that blacks suffer from national oppression and class exploitation and that the black working class is the vanguard of the struggle. The black people constitute the core

of the emergent Azanian nation. The former settler-colonialists will have to re-orientate themselves to become Azanians. Their acceptability to Azania is conditional on their willingness to accept the reality of the new state. The BC Movement sees that it is necessary to wed the Social with the National Question in order to guarantee that the gains of the revolution will not be sabotaged by treacherous petit-bourgeois leadership.

When imperialism began exploiting Azania's mineral wealth, there was an influx of skilled white workers to the country. This group was in no time elevated to a labour aristocracy and protected from competition by the black workers. The Industrial Conciliation Act of 1913 legalized this division, formally drawing the white labour aristocrat into the ruling class. Thus the white labour aristocrat participated in legitimizing land robbery and arrogating to white settlerdom 87% of Azania.

We reject the notion of **internal colonialism** because it is based on the false assumption that the whites are natives of Azania. The absence of a metropolitan power makes SA a semi-colony. Doctrines like internal colonialism are unsubtle concessions to the heightened consciousness of the black people. European chauvinism simply refuses to recognize the right of national self-determination amongst blacks. In Azania, the multi-racialists or progressive-democrats (the modern day missionaries) try to propagate that Azania "belongs to all who live in it, black and white". We repeat that Azania is not a prostitute which belongs to all or everybody: Azania belongs to the black people. BC is of the view that invariably the most radical amongst the whites is imbued with racism and that no black person can wish away his practical experience at the hands of white society.

Whites who claim that they are committed to seeing a total transformation of this society must slough off the layers of ruling class racist indoctrination and self-induced racist prejudice and begin actively to denounce their heritage of land-robbery, and proclaim the legitimacy of national self-determination led by the black working class, submerge their instinctive herrenvolk and hegemonic desires. When such primary stages of re-socialization are totally experienced, such persons are on the road to becoming Azanians.