The Class Character of the GNU: Understanding the Outcome of the 2024 Elections

A Marxist-Leninist Perspective

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Introduction

- **Contextualising the GNU within the framework of Colonialism of a Special Type (CST) and the CST state**
  - Importance of understanding economic and political continuities post-1994 elections
  - Ongoing analyses by the South African Communist Party (SACP) regarding the 2024 elections

Framework of Colonialism of a Special Type (CST) and CST State

- CST intertwined colonial and capitalist domination in South Africa
- Reinforced racial, class, and gender oppression within a single political entity – South Africa.
- The 1994 elections ended political and juridical CST but did not dismantle CST's economic base

The State as an Instrument of Oppression and Arena of Class Struggle

- **Instrument of Class Rule or Class Power:**
  - Maintains economic dominance of the capitalist class and enforces racial and gender divisions
- **Site of Class Struggle**:
  - Post-1994 state allowed more space for class contestation and advancement towards national democracy and socialism

SACP's Position: "The working class must contest the capitalist class in **all sites of power**, including the state."

The State vs. Government in Marxist-Leninist Theory

- **State vs. Government:**
  - Any state serves the interests of the ruling class through institutions like the police, military, and legal system
  - Any government, is only an element of the state - its administrative arm that enacts policies within the framework of the state
  - Governments may change, but class relations of power, particularly the economic base, can remain.

The Present State – a Neo-CST?

- **Key points are that neo-CST Features persists:**
  - Economic continuity from the pre-1994 era: Wealth and power concentrated in the hands of monopoly capitalists – and our dependency to imperialist centres.
  - Tendency to manage rather than transform CST legacies, focusing on distribution over economic transformation – the two must go together:
    - This largely being an outcome of 'reformist-reforms' (more later).

Distinguishing Between Reformist and Transformative Reforms

- **Reformist Reforms**:
  - Maintain the capitalist framework, provide temporary relief
  - Transformative Reforms:
    - Aim to dismantle entrenched economic, racial, and gender structures of CST
- **Revolutionary Reforms**:
  - Link these reforms to systemic change for true liberation and equality

SACP's Perspective on the 2024 Elections

- **Key Points:**
  - The most consequential elections for the ANC-led movement since 1994 faced with
    - A bolstered forces of opposition, backed by imperialist forces and a rising global right-wiring forces
    - Worsening material conditions for w/class: poverty, unemployment, and inequality
    - A weakened ANC-led movement due to years of internal divisions, factionalism, and corruption, lack of coherent strategic approach…
  - A major national electoral setbacks at national , involving some provinces
  - Decline in voter turnout reflects disillusionment and a "crisis of representation" for the working class (over 20 million people did not vote).

SACP's Strategic Perspective

- **2022 National Congress and its Programme:**
  - Anticipated of the 2024 elections and the potential loss of ANC's majority status
  - Recognised a possible shift in class character due to the GNU
  - Highlighted the need for Party contestation of governing arrangements, should such reality emerge.
  - The need to build a powerful socialist movement from the ground up
    - Including a broad-based Left Popular Front united around a pro-worker, pro-poor, and anti-neoliberal agenda.

SACP's Response to the GNU

- **Response to GNU**:
  - A critical but non-oppositionist stance within the framework of the Alliance
  - Opposed to presence of right-wing parties (DA, FF in particular) , in what appear to be a "coalition" rather than "national unity" government.
  - Vigilance and ongoing struggle against neoliberal policies, for effective Manifesto Implementation
    - **Key Policy Areas**: Developmental macroeconomic policy, public employment, state-led industrial policy, transformation of the financial sector, National Health Insurance, Universal Basic Income Grant

Mobilising for a Socialist Movement

- **Mobilisation Focus**:
  - Building a powerful socialist movement of workers and the poor (at the core COSATU and SACP)
  - Building Left Popular Front around common issues facing South Africans
- **Encouraging democratic, popular participation** (not be confused with 'National Dialoque') to ensure accountability and reflect the interests of the broader South Africans.

Conclusion

- Understanding the Class Character of GNU: Within the CST and NDR framework
- Reimagining the State: As a both a instrument for class power/class rule, and contested terrain for constructing a new order based on equality and solidarity
- Current State: Features of neo-CST managing rather than transforming inequality
- Ongoing Struggle: Balance immediate reforms with long-term transformative goals while building a powerful socialist movement of workers and the poor

Q&A

- - Open Floor for Questions
- - Discussion Points