

CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE IS A STRATEGIC PILLAR TO REVITALISE THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION.

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Introduction

The call for the ANC to hold consultative congress is neither new nor ahistorical in its existence as organization that is responsible to transform society. The Consultative conference had always served as an impetus for renewal to the historical mandate of the organization. The congress had always been able to assist the ANC in determining political programme that is been underpinned by realities, therefore resolve and respond to those particular challenges. This had been a source of strength and strategic pillar of the South African revolution.

The principle of criticism and self criticism in this regard plays a key determining role, in a sense that it will unpack mistakes, weaknesses, strength, and successes of the organization ,particularly since its ascendance into political power as manifested by the Democratic Breakthrough of 1994.

Veterans of the ANC are people who gained lot of political experience in the organization through the hard times of exile, imprisonment and underground. They possess a particular hope that can be used to take ANC forward. Perhaps it was one of the reason why the movement resolved on having veteran formation within its ranks.

Unfortunately the influence of corrupt capitalist system within government and society had successfully managed to create a dichotomy between the current leadership of the ANC and the veterans. On the other hand we had seen the level of leadership inexperience of whom majority are interested in the accumulation path. These type of leaders are impatient to criticism and they cannot unite the ANC and also put strict control measures on the state.

It is not like many of the veterans are clean with regard to corruption. Many of them had suffered serious financial setbacks in their economy after Polokwane conference. They are compradors who survived through the social assistance of the state, and parastatals.However it will be difficult to conclude that their call is been informed by the business bankruptcy

The call for consultative congress is radical and seeks to resuscitate old tradition of the ANC of consulting with communities in order to get popular mandate from various sections of society. This is a good start to dislocate the structural crisis of the organization. The current leadership becomes subjective when the call is been made by resorting to a glib response of policy conference, national conference wherein we all

aware of incapacity of structures of the ANC in defending and reinforcing policies and decisions carried by the organization through the time of its existence.

Ill discipline amongst the ANC became rife and reached an uncontrollable situation wherein the organization had been undermined through commitment which members in government always undermine decisions taken within the organization by carrying mandate outside the movement. In this regard organization is solely used for rhetoric and lip services by conscious cadres.

The consultative conference will help the ANC to take clear policies towards the congress that seeks to confirm values and traditions of the movement. Perhaps there will be no any dire need to hold a policy conference as those decisions will be much more concrete.

Morogoro ushered lot of revolutionary determination from the ANC as an organization wherein it adopted the Strategy and Tactics which defines the historical mission of the ANC as well as the role players who will assist the ANC to fulfill its historical tasks. It was only again in Kabwe wherein the ANC was evaluating and assessing ANC programme that was adopted in 1969. One of the outstanding principle from Kabwe was the state of readiness for ANC to govern society. The conference advanced a resolution which instructed the collective leadership to develop strategic policies such as the Cadre Policy and the Deployment. The Movement was nearly overtaken by events which were taking place in the country and set backs of the World Socialist System in Eastern Europe. The ANC was ready to face challenges of operating under the conditions of legality after the unbanning of political formation by the Racist Tyranny.

The 1991 Durban conference united all forces from exile, UDF, underground and prison into one strong formations and adopted approach for building ANC structures under conditions of legality as well as preparing itself to lead on behalf of the masses. It was a difficult period wherein the enemy waged war against the masses of people in order to threaten the support base of the ANC.

We are raising these because the call for a Consultative Conference is not new in the history of the ANC. Put in a different paradigm, ANC held successful Consultative Conferences which had assisted it to overcome challenges which wanted to rent it into political asunder. Therefore there is a dire need for the ANC as they ruling party and hope for people to hold the consultative conference in purport to identify problems and challenges, and bring best solutions that will make ANC to earn respect in society.¹

¹ There was Congress of the People in Kliptown which adopted Freedom Charter

Trajectory of Neoliberalism

The current age of neo liberalism has already lasted beyond one generation. The solidity of neoliberalism, its persistent ability to renew itself (globally and regionally) and intensify its hold on government and society despite economic volatility and the depth of the current crisis warrants recognition and detailed investigation within the context of the Consultative conference²

The ANC have a task to redefine its character based on the current realities as well as the lessons of history of revolution taken place in the last century. The neoliberal trajectory has impacted negatively in the state and the ANC in a sense that the organization and its cadres are highly demobilized to take part in society, but instead they structure becomes a band wagon for neoliberalism. These on its own have rolled back the important axiom which says people must be their own liberators. Despite the gains that had been made by changing society from colonialism and Apartheid, neo liberalism is now rolling back those important gains that were made in championing better life for all. Neoliberalism in the state is now been used to sustain private accumulation (through the political will) and the masses are been treated as shock absorbers and voters during the election.

State and the Party

The Scientific Marxist definition of the state remains relevant as ever, wherein the state cannot be defined or determined outside the borders of class antagonism which characterize a given society. ANC has defined the South African state as a developmental in nature, hitherto seeks to rally both capital and labor into court of manifestation for bringing fundamental changes in our society as espoused within the values of the Constitution of the Republic AND the Freedom Charter. Flawed process had been created through ill-discipline ANC wherein capital was given and ammunition to entrench itself and set up the agenda for the state. It is in our lifetime wherein the state apparatus unleashed its power by ruthlessly murdering striking workers in Marikana solely to address the call that was made by capital in pursuance for super exploitation.

Whilst a state remains a key pillar to address the challenges of colonialism that had spanned for centuries, it also erroneous for the ANC to allow process wherein the state is been used for narrow selfish enrichment by its cadres. Reality of the matter is that the state remains power for ANC

² See 13 Things you need to know about neoliberalism-Ben Fine

factions to loot and divide society in a manner which really has goaded its actual support base.

Reality of the matter is that ANC is facing the structural crisis in an unprecedented manner. The trajectory of neo liberal accumulation had captured influential structural arrangement solely to advance profit maximization. This can be illustrious within this paradigm:

- A branch chairperson becomes automatically a councilor
- Regional Chairperson automatically becomes a District/Executive Mayor.
- Provincial Chairperson automatically becomes a Premier
- An NEC members becomes Ministers,CEOs, and Comprador Bourgeoisie

There was a particular time in the history of the liberation struggle when there was no organizational arrangement of NEC, PEC,REC and Branches. The intended purpose of structural alignment was basically informed by the fact that ANC was with the people for the people.

Currently it is with the market for profit maximization, using the influence which ANC accumulated in history. Joel Netitshende is making a valid point by saying it is going to be difficult for the looters to abandon the ANC. We fully agree with the comrade more especially because the are incidents which revealed the crisis

The calling for a woman president has nothing to do with building strong organization but a tactical method to sustain private accumulation

Constitution and the rule of law

There has been historical development in the recent past wherein ANC leadership decided to undermine the rule of law and supremacy of the constitution. The constitution of the Republic remains a product of what the National Liberation Movement struggled for in almost the entire life of its social existence. Therefore there should be a platform in which the ANC demystify its stance in deepening democracy and the rule of law. It was President Mandela who gave a good example of respecting the rule of law the time when he was taken to court by Dr Louis Lyt.What President Mandela did was to respect the law and appeared before the court with a belief that the

court will rule correctly on the matter. Champions of neoliberals are masquerading as the best people who can defend the constitution, whilst on the other hand ANC members had been demobilized with intention to treat democracy and the rule of law as something that is alien to membership³. Now consultative conference have responsibilities to establish systems that will make residents to know about democracy and the rule of law within the context of people being their own liberators.

Criticism and Self Criticism

One of the critical aspects that ANC must do, is to implement principle which Lenin wrote about (see What has to be done 1902).The principle of criticism and self-criticism remains strength for any organisation.The reflection should be underpinned by the following:

- Do we still need to rely on the capitalist framework to pursue National Democratic Revolution?
- The results of 3 August Local Government election
- Political arrogance
- Corruption
- Call for President Zuma to step down
- Call for consultative congress
- MK Council resolutions
- Criticism from strategic alliance partners

These are clear categories of the challenges facing the Movement with proposed solutions within their trails. ANC had always emphasized and believed in the concept of people must become their own liberators. Lenin had always warned revolutionaries and their formations that “we must not abuse the word people”. Now the word people encompass broader social classes and social strata, rallied behind programme of National Democratic Revolution. There is a level of biasness which has been developed out of experience in the struggle for emancipation of our people. It says the working class and the poor must be the primary beneficiaries of the NDR. On the other hand the capitalist system remains a very dangerous system for survival of the ANC in a sense that inexperienced people and political accumulators are using ANC to make money and they don't care what will be the consequences.MK commissariat needs to be applauded though their combat readiness of calling for a political gathering which had clear interests of ANC and people. Resolution taken is such that ANC should not be divorced from people and its leaders should be accountable to the masses. The council reaffirmed a necessity for ANC to go back to its glory and reoccupy the space it lost because mistakes taking place. State still remains a viable instrument that can be used to accelerate changes that is needed more particularly in a form of a leap. Second

³ See the case called Dr Loius Luyt versus President Mandela

radical phase of the NDR should be characterized by a leap because on its own it is a scientific approach to remedy the situation. Political accumulators are using the structures to pursue their own narrow selfish agenda. They care less about organizational future, as to whether ANC dies or survive is not their problems. This has created structural crisis within the broader liberation movement because all structures lack capacity to defend the organization as well as being the custodian of policy implementation.

National Democratic Revolution or Revisionism?

The project for addressing the National Question in South Africa had been correctly spearheaded by the liberation alliance under the leadership of the ANC. 1994 Democratic Breakthrough put the NDR into new plane wherein lot of fundamental changes did take place. The revolutionary forces always believed that the NDR should be defended, deepened and advanced. All role players are currently worried about the shape that the revolution is taking. There is no central driver of the NDR at a political level.

Motive forces of the revolution remains disintegrated and disunited as well as captured by capitalism. Leaders of the MDM and other formations they don't see capitalism as a threat to the NDR.

The other overarching fact is the question as to whether prime motive force of the NDR is the working class? If so why private accumulation had occupied a center stage in driving the politics of the country?

Therefore a platform is needed to confront these realities and renew the historical mission of the liberation forces. The ANC will have also to redefine its character in the new conditions of legality as a party in the state.

The fact of the matter is that the ANC had adopted the National Democratic Revolution as key strategic programme in purport to address the national grievances in whatever form it seeks to manifest itself. It had also outlined key strategic drivers of the motive forces who will bring changes. The word revolution means radical fundamental change which does much more with taking development from lower to high and complex level. Now if ANC is serious about the revolution, it should roll back the influence of the market from its agenda. The invincible hand of the market had worked very hard to corrupt leaders of the ANC and therefore put price in the motive forces of the NDR manipulatively.

The capitalist system had managed to cause a great division with strategic partners for implementation of the NDR. This has been clearly revealed by developments and attitude of Alliance Partners in the following:

- It is apparent that the entire membership of the SACP has lost confidence in the ANC and they are now pressurising the leadership for SACP to contest election and be accountable to its membership.
- The NEC (individually) members have turned into lackeys of the market and they are directly involved in the looting of the state.
- COSATU is more divided as a result of neo liberal policies that had been adopted by the ANC and this had impacted in ANC losing key metros like Nelson Mandela Metro.
- Women and Youth formations within the ANC remain spokesperson of the leaders for championship of a capitalist patronage. This had side-lined participation of these formations in driving changes

Reaffirmation on the pillars of the struggle

The conference had to assist and the revitalization of the motive forces for a radical change within the tradition of NDR and Freedom Charter. The pillars cannot coexist with the influence of the market as it has ushered symbols of collapse of these profound pillars. This however could not happen without correct political leadership, nurtured and well groomed through the scientific tools of analysis(Dialectical and Historical Materialism).The conference should develop framework for ANC to commit itself in cadre development and further integrate economy as one of its main task to eliminate oppression. The ANC is now operating in different conditions that really demand proper planning and consultation with intention of reaching its ultimate goal.

Conclusion

The challenge faced by the ANC in the current conjuncture is its clear role in leading society. The results of local government election clearly dictate a dire need for revolutionary honesty and organizational introspection. The country and the ANC remains at the cross road. The organization remains peoples movement and it has to be always with people. The consultative Conference must have views of different communities and concretize them into a solid programme of action. The historical gains need to be defended and further be taken to the highest level. This can only happen if there is clear political will from the side of the leadership who will be identified through the consultative conference. This leadership cannot be determined through flawed ANC structural processes. The future of the organization should be define outside the neoliberal framework, and that on its own should be underpinned by decisive programme on cadre development

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