The question of building a caring society within a framework of an economy dominated by private ownership is a key question at the heart of what is confronting revolutionary forces. It is certainly not a simple question with simple answers. Whatever answers are provided will go a long way in shedding light on whether we are still involved in the national democratic revolution and liberation struggle.

If we are still involved in a liberation struggle, the next question to ask is from what we want to liberate ourselves from? Do we want to liberate ourselves from colonialism of a special type? Do we want to liberate ourselves from apartheid colonialism? From what do we want to liberate ourselves from?

This is one of the basic questions that we need to answer in answering the question of building a caring society within the framework of capitalism. In my view a caring society is a society where there is no exploitation of one person by the other, a society where all the surplus value is not appropriated by the wealthy, a society where there is no poverty in the sea of wealth. It is a society where the majority of the people are not reduced to begging and not knowing where the next meal will come from, a society based on ubuntu not greed.

How can this society be created in a situation whereby the ruling classes have at their disposal a formidable range of weapons for the maintenance of their domination and the defence of their power and privileges. How then are these ruling classes to be undone, and how is a new social order to be established? If we say we are still involved in a liberation struggle, does it mean that we want to do away with this domination and create a new social order?

Or does it mean we want to be accommodated in the existing social order? May I pose this question again: as a liberation movement from what do we want to liberate ourselves? If our answer is to liberate ourselves from economic exploitation engendered by the existing capitalist mode of production, how then can we seek our liberation by being accommodated in the same system that exploits us?

It is axiomatic that our true and genuine liberation lies in the abolition of the existing system that is responsible for our woes. Therefore the answer lies in crafting and pursuing a revolutionary strategy for the creation of a caring society without the existing social formation. The answer does not lie in a reformist strategy.

How can revolutionaries established comfortably in the existing social order and who have no intention of its wholesale transformation bring about a social revolution? Any argument that seeks to build a caring society within the framework of capitalism is nothing else but pure reformism that is not revolutionary in nature, form and content. Reform is a strategy that naturally includes the pursuit of reforms of every kind - economic, social, and political - within the framework of capitalism. Are we involved in the national democratic revolution or struggle to reform the existing social order? If we are involved in a national democratic revolution, our primary objective is the abolition of the existing social order.

A caring society cannot be created within a capitalist framework. On the contrary a ‘permanent
revolution’ can happen within a framework of capitalism. What is meant by permanent revolution? The ultimate objective of permanent revolution is to transcend and not build a caring society within capitalism.

That is why Lenin argued that ‘we cannot move out of the bourgeois-democratic revolution boundaries of the Russian revolution, but we can vastly extend these boundaries and within these boundaries we can and must fight for the interests of the working people, for its immediate needs and for conditions that will make it possible to prepare its forces for the future complete victory’.

The primary question to be posed in this context is whether it is possible for a system whose very nature and essence is the exploitation of many by the few can give rise to a caring society? Is a caring society on the contrary not fundamentally a negation of a market capitalist society? It is precisely because of the need to create a caring society that a market capitalist economic system was vigorously challenged and overturned on a number of occasions in the distant past by the ideology of a caring society.

The ideology of a caring society was an offshoot of the brutalities of a market capitalist system in the sense that it subjected the creators of value and wealth to severe, brutal, harsh and torturous conditions. In short, it subjected the toiling masses to super-exploitation while enjoying the fruits of their hard labour.

It is because of these conditions that the idea of a caring society manifested itself. This idea was however suppressed because it posed a threat to the materialistic way of life. Those who wanted to establish a caring society were subjected to exile, prison, torture and killings.

Today it is fashionable for former revolutionaries to glorify a materialistic life and accumulation of wealth, obviously at the expense of vulnerable individuals and groups. It is fashionable for the erstwhile revolutionaries to urge comrades not to mind being filthy rich without mentioning at whose expense.

However, I still want to be convinced that any person in the course of the revolutionary process shed blood and died so that capitalism could triumph. Can anyone come forth and tell us who, during the course of the liberation struggle, died for a market capitalist system? Did Solomon Mahlangu die for a system based on greed to reign supreme?

Did comrades struggle and suffer so that a system based on greed could be victorious? If not, why today do you think capitalism will create a caring society? Is capitalism not a negation of a caring society? That is why so many people suffer torture, exile, imprisonment and even death for the creation of a caring society to negate the monster of capitalism.

In order to understand the evil nature of a market capitalist system, let us look at the recent history of this brutal system.

According to Eduardo Galeano:

- No fewer than three millions civilians died in the DRC since 1999. They died for Coltan, a rare mineral that is used in the manufacturing of cell phones, computers, etc.

- More than 40 years ago Patrice Lumumba was sacrificed on the alter of gold and diamonds.

- In the Darfur region of Sudan close to a million people have been killed and sacrificed because of oil.

- In Iraq thousands of people have been maimed and killed because of oil and as a consequence the country has been reduced to ashes.

- A state of siege is imposed on poor countries to either privatise or face death.

In our country (South Africa) how many millions of people have been annihilated since the arrival of
The challenges of building a caring society
Published on Pambazuka News (https://www.pambazuka.org)

the colonialists in 1652?

In the light of these mind boggling facts, who dares to suggest that a caring society can be created in the womb of capitalism? If that is the case we can all throw ourselves in the jaws of a shark and see whether we can emerge alive. Unfortunately this is not the age of miracles. The capitalist nigger, the road to success, is but only for the few.

The fact is that a caring society will be born on the ashes of capitalism. Capitalism must first die in order for a caring society to be born. There is no other way. Any other way is a futile exercise and infantile wishful thinking.

* BROUGHT TO YOU BY PAMBAZUKA NEWS

* Please do not take Pambazuka for granted! Become a Friend of Pambazuka [2] NOW and help keep Pambazuka FREE and INDEPENDENT!

* Ntozakhe Douglas Mthukwane is an ordinary ANC and SACP member. He writes in his personal capacity. (nmthukwane@ncpg.gov.za [3] OR cadredm@gmail.com [4])
* Please send comments to editor[at]pambazuka[dot]org [5] or comment online at Pambazuka News [6].

Categories: Features [7]
Issue Number: 574 [8]
Article Image Caption | Source: M O

(function(d, s, id) { var js, fjs = d.getElementsByTagName(s)[0]; if (d.getElementById(id)) return; js = d.createElement(s); js.id = id; js.src = "//connect.facebook.net/en_US/sdk.js#xfbml=1&appId=1465091963738031&version=v2.0"; fjs.parentNode.insertBefore(js, fjs); })(document, 'script', 'facebook-jssdk');

Article-Summary:
Is the liberation struggle over? If not, what are we fighting? And how can we build a caring society?

Category: Governance [9]

Source URL: https://www.pambazuka.org/node/78317

Links:
[1] https://www.pambazuka.org/taxonomy/term/7843
[3] mailto:nmthukwane@ncpg.gov.za
[5] mailto:editor@pambazuka.org
[8] https://www.pambazuka.org/taxonomy/term/7834