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**The African National Congress in Exile:
Strategy and Tactics 1960-1993**

by

Dale Thomas McKinley

A Dissertation submitted to the faculty of The University of
North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
Department of Political Science.

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Approved by:

<u><i>Catharine A. Nwagwu</i></u>	Advisor
<u><i>Arthur J. Levin</i></u>	Reader
<u><i>Julius E. Nyong'o</i></u>	Reader

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DALE THOMAS MCKINLEY. *The African National Congress in Exile: Strategy and Tactics 1960-1993* (Under the direction of
of
Dr. Catharine Newbury)

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is about the struggle for the national liberation of South Africa. My investigation is centered around the strategy and tactics of the main liberation organization, the African National Congress (ANC), and its alliance partner the South African Communist Party (SACP). The core of the study covers the period 1960-1993, a time, with the exception of the last three years, in which these organizations were officially banned by the white minority apartheid government. More precisely, this study seeks to provide a critical historical analysis of those strategy and tactics within the externalized (internationalized) environment within which these organizations operated.

The analytical heart of this dissertation revolves around a crucially identified dialectic of struggle. It is the dialectic between the objective conditions within which the ANC and the SACP conducted their liberation struggle and the subjective choice of strategy and tactics the organizations pursued. Special focus is given to the role of leadership. Analysis of the period after the 1990 unbanning

and the consequent internal resuscitation of the organizations will serve to show the most immediate results of such a dialectic.

By showing how the liberation organizations have responded, both pro and re-actively, to the changing historical conditions under which their struggle has labored, a much clearer picture emerges of the connection between choices and possibilities. This approach reveals much about the ways in which revolutionary leadership interprets and acts upon both the structural conditions that contextualize the struggle they lead, and the role of agency which seeks to change those conditions. Consequently, the rich and varied activities of the "rank-and-file" are highlighted as fundamentally integral to an understanding of both actual and potential outcomes of struggle.

Through this study I intend to show that the dialectic of South Africa's national liberation struggle has, despite potential appearances to the contrary, seriously undermined the basis for any genuine realization of the ANC's own stated goal of struggle - national liberation for the "transfer of power to the people."

CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
	1.1. Surveying the Literature: Some Theoretical Considerations	4
	1.2. Looking at the ANC	15
	1.3. Structure and Struggle	18
II.	EARLY HISTORY AND STRUGGLE: THE FORMATIVE YEARS.....	27
	2.1. The 1930's and 1940's: 'Front' Politics and Lost Opportunities	36
	2.2. The Rise of Dual Nationalisms	42
	2.3. Setting the Boundaries of Liberation	47
III.	EXTERNALIZATION: NATIONAL LIBERATION OF A SPECIAL TYPE (1960-1975).....	68
	3.1. Armed Struggle: Turning Away from a Mass Base	71
	3.2. The 1960's: The Role of the SACP and the Descent into an Exile <i>Laager</i>	76
	3.3. Morogoro and Beyond: The SACP Ascendant	82
IV.	From SOWETO to KABWE (1976-1984)	95
	4.1. The '76 Uprising and Beyond: Answered Prayers and Lost Opportunities	100
	4.2. Competing for 'Hearts and Minds'	106
	4.3. Viva Internationalism	111
	4.4. Internal Mobilization	116
V.	THE POLITICS OF UNGOVERNABILITY: INSURRECTIONARY HOPES AND STRATEGIC REALITIES (1985-1989).....	131
	5.1. The Kabwe Conference	133
	5.2. Internal Revolt	138
	5.3. The Logic of External Management	148

VI.	FOURTH PILLAR, FIFTH COLUMN: THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE STRUGGLE.....	166
6.1.	The Push for Negotiations	167
6.2	Sanctions: Misplaced Reliance	177
6.3	Toward February, 1990	183
VII.	RETURNING HOME: THE STRATEGY AND PRACTICE OF NEGOTIATIONS (1990-1993).....	200
7.1.	The Fetishization of Talks	201
7.2	The Strategy of the Zigzag	212
7.3.	Damn the Torpedos, Full Speed Ahead	220
VIII.	CONCLUSION: OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES.....	248
8.1.	Searching for Unity in the Face of Contradiction	251
8.2	Laboring under a Weighted Dialecticism	255
	APPENDICES	262
	REFERENCES	322

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

*A Luta Continua!*¹ This popular slogan borrowed from the Portuguese still holds its meaning at least in one part of the world - South Africa. Three hundred years after the first settlers arrived at the ironically named Cape of Good Hope in the 1600's a struggle of liberation, varying in content and degree, has been waged within and outside its borders. It is a struggle that has followed the historical mutation of global mercantilism, modern capitalist development and penetration, and their uniquely South African by-products. Infused with a range of often peculiarly distinct racial, national, and class conflict, the struggle for liberation in South Africa has provided an enduring source of inspiration for ordinary people the world over as well as riveting material for academic analysts.

This study is about that struggle and one of the organizations that has now come to occupy center stage, the African National Congress(ANC). The core of my investigation revolves around the strategy and tactics of the externalized ANC and its alliance partner, the South African Communist Party(SACP)², with special focus on the last two decades. The time frame of this study ends with the agreement for the installation of a Transitional Executive Council(TEC) in 1993. (The TEC represented the transitional institutionalized form of the negotiated political settlement forged between the ANC and the ruling (white) National Party). The short-lived 'rule' of the TEC and the subsequent victory of the ANC in the April 1994 elections signaled a qualitatively distinct era in the history of the

South African struggle which remains open for future analysis.³

The analytical heart of this dissertation revolves around the dialectic between the fluid objective (structural) conditions within which the ANC and the SACP conducted their liberation struggle and the choice of strategy and tactics the organizations (with special focus on leadership) pursued. By showing how the liberation movement has responded, both pro- and re-actively, to the changing historical conditions under which their struggle has labored, a much clearer picture emerges of the connection between choices and possibilities.

Such an approach reveals much about the ways in which revolutionary leadership interprets and acts upon both the structural conditions that contextualize the struggle they lead, and the role of agency which seeks to change those conditions. Consequently, the rich and varied activities of the 'rank-and-file' are highlighted as fundamentally integral to an understanding of both actual and potential outcomes of struggle. In this way, analysis becomes more than just an intellectual exercise in methodological construction and application of theory - it can hopefully become both a basis for future, critically-informed intellectual investigation, and empowering for those to whom it is directed.⁴

The inclusion of the period after the February 1990 unbanning of the ANC and its internal resuscitation will serve to show the most immediate results of such a dialectic. By association this approach is grounded in an objective/subjective plane of analysis, or to put it in more practical terms, a combination of structure and struggle. Through such a study I intend to show that this dialectic has, despite appearances to the contrary, undermined the basis for any genuine realization of the ANC's own stated goal of struggle - national liberation for the 'transfer of power to the people'.⁵

On a wider level, this thesis has relevancy to situations beyond the confines of South Africa. Although the ANC's struggle possesses its own distinct historical characteristics, any contemporary liberation struggle in the 'Third World' will also have to deal with an international environment where capitalism (and its 'free market' politics) wreak havoc across the globe and where the mass mobilization necessary to effect genuinely transformative liberation no longer (centrally) revolves around the barrel of a gun.

Since the 1963 Rivonia debacle, where almost the entire senior leadership of the ANC was arrested and subsequently imprisoned, the ANC operated primarily as an externally based liberation movement. Although such externalization has been common to many a contemporary liberation movement⁶, the ANC's case is special for a number of reasons:

- the signal failure of the ANC to develop a cohesive and viable internal independent organizational presence up until its unbanning in February 1990 (the 'front' alliances with trade unions and the United Democratic Front (UDF) do not qualify as such);
- the failure of the ANC's armed struggle to have any significant military impact on the enemy. To be sure, the objective physical conditions of South Africa and complex regional geopolitics combined to present the ANC with serious barriers to establishing and sustaining a classic guerrilla struggle which the ANC had opted for after its banning and the formation of an armed wing, Umkhonto We Sizwe (Spear of the Nation);
- the 'success', and amount of human and material resources expended on one of the ANC's stated strategic pillars of struggle - international isolation of the apartheid regime⁷ (the sanctions campaign is a prime example). The success of this strategy certainly qualifies the ANC as the most internationally supported

and recognized liberation movement in modern times.

In addition to the above, the high level of international capitalist economic penetration of the South African economy combined with its perceived strategic importance has made South Africa a particularly important regional player highly dependent on, and vulnerable to, international political and economic processes. The presence of the inequitable apartheid system has further contributed to an international climate of intervention, albeit circumscribed in most circles by economic and political self-interest.

All of these factors point toward the need for a comprehensive analysis of the ANC's strategy and tactics within an externalized (internationalized) environment. Such an analysis would seem to be directly relevant to the last two decades, a time of serious upheaval in both the international environment and the internal situation in South Africa. It was during this time period when the ANC gained international and domestic recognition/prominence as the 'leading' South African liberation organization.'

Such a project will reveal much about the practical politics and strategic decision-making of the ANC and its leadership, operating within an international system whose main players possess their own specific agenda. Indeed, the ever expanding penetration of a 'new world order' capitalist international political economy with all its attendant technological, military, and financial sophistication and might, raises serious questions concerning the strategy and tactics of any contemporary 'national liberation' movement.

Surveying the Literature: Some Theoretical Considerations

The voluminous literature concerning revolution and national liberation provides a rich theoretical and practical source background for this project. It is useful

to divide this literature into three main traditions although there may certainly be variants of what is proposed here - Marxist, non-Marxist, and neo-Marxist.

It seems only natural to begin with Marx whose pioneering study of revolution has influenced, in one way or another, all subsequent writing. Although many may question the predictive powers of classical Marxist theory there is no doubt that its analytical power still holds a great degree of relevance. Marx's basic starting point was what he saw as the historic march of change from one socio-economic order/system to another (specifically from feudalism - capitalism and capitalism-socialism). Marx posited that,

In the social production of their means of existence men enter into definite, necessary relations which are independent of their will, productive relationships which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The aggregate of these productive relationships constitutes the economic structure of society...It is not the consciousness of men which determines their existence, but, on the contrary, it is their social existence that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development the material productive forces of society come into contradiction with the existing productive relationships, or, what is but a legal expression for these, with the property relations within which they had moved before. From the forms of development of the productive forces these relationships are transformed into their fetters. Then an epoch of social revolution opens. In considering such revolutions it is necessary always to distinguish between the material revolution in the economic conditions of production...and the juridical, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic - in a word, ideological forms wherein men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out.⁹

In other words, Marx believed that the conditions for revolution occur when the economic capacities of a society come into a fundamental conflict (contradiction) with the existing class structure (what Marx refers to as a "material revolution"). The possibilities and trajectories of this

"material revolution" however, are inextricably bound to the parallel "ideological" struggles that take place between people. Thus, the specific form and character of such a revolution (revolutionary period) rests on the content of the activities of those making the revolution (inclusive of all classes) within a particular (yet fluid) material context.

In its acute form, this transition can acquire a concentrated revolutionary form.¹⁰ As Lenin put it, "the transfer of state power from one class to another class is the first, the principal, the basic sign of a revolution...."¹¹ This perspective of revolutionary change can be sub-divided into a number of complementary requirements: a rupture at the ideological level or a situation where the ruling class has lost its ideological hegemony; a creative upsurge in political activism on the part of the oppressed classes;¹² deep fissures within the ruling class and conflict over how to solve them; loss of unitary control by the ruling state over instruments of violence; the existence of a political party capable of directing and leading struggle.¹³

What is of greatest importance in the Marxist conception of revolution is that there has to be a radical rupture in social relations, a revolution in class terms. Many have interpreted this tradition as being wholly 'structuralist' in outlook, which in my view is an extremely narrow reading.¹⁴ Although Marx and Lenin both located modern revolutionary change within the overall structure of capitalist relations, they constantly reiterated that the active conscious involvement of those who were oppressed would ultimately determine the character and direction of change.¹⁵ Lenin gave this content by predicating the "triumph" of revolution in a situation where "the 'lower classes' (workers and unemployed) do not want to live in the old way, and the 'upper classes' (capitalists) cannot carry on in the old way...."¹⁶

While their analysis and practice was grounded in a specific historical materialist framework, I would argue that Marx and Lenin did not view revolution as following some sort of pre-determined course, but rather located the 'self-activity' and creativeness of the revolution precisely in the practice of those who make it - the oppressed. It is this recognition that allows an analysis of the conditions within which revolutionary activity takes place, to encompass both objective and subjective factors in a creative and fluid way.

Marx and Lenin also applied the concept of social revolution (as the struggle to realize socialism) to the question of the struggle for national liberation. For them, the two were inseparable. Thus Lenin stated,

The ...revolution will be an era of a whole series of battles...on all economic and political questions including national questions. It is the resolution of the sum of conflicts stemming from all these unresolved issues that will produce a social revolution...all democratic demands (including) the self-determination of nations, must be rounded off and united in the demand for revolutionary struggle against capitalism.¹⁷

I would suggest that this perspective incorporates both the differences and mutuality of national liberation and socialism. While Marx and Lenin pointed to the class content and limited claims of national liberation in the modern era, one of the weaknesses of their analysis was the lack of a full appreciation of the role that peasants (as opposed to the urban working class) might play in fomenting and carrying through with national liberation struggles. Similarly, they were unable to foresee (and thus analyze) the future intensity and scope of struggles that centrally involved issues of race and narrow nationalism. However, their central argument was that there can be no meaningful national liberation without a simultaneous struggle against what they saw as the root of national oppression - capitalism and imperialism. In short, they argued that

national liberation (influenced or driven by whatever demographic and/or culturally specific factors) would be little more than a political shift of the ruling class without a corresponding transformation in social relations, without a class revolution.

If we view Marxist theory in the way described above, then we can systematically analyze past and ongoing social struggles through a complex lens that allows us to incisively interpret both the objective (structure) and subjective (struggle). We will also have the tools to investigate and analyze the differences and mutuality of revolution and national liberation. I would argue, that the combination of Marx and Lenin's theoretical and strategic critiques of capitalism, grounded in practical struggles for an alternative social system, are more relevant than ever.

This relevancy is grounded in three simple, yet fundamental reasons: firstly, the materialist basis of Marx and Lenin's analysis and strategy, by pointing to the material foundations of all human interaction and conflict, remains central in our attempts to understand and analyze social processes; secondly, since varying forms of capitalism continue to represent (as they have for the past century) the dominant 'characteristic' of national and global political economy, a critically informed Marxist-Leninist perspective allows a more wholistic analysis and investigation of social struggles that take place¹⁸; and lastly, as applied specifically to the history and 'post-liberation' practice of national liberation movements, Marx and Lenin's arguments concerning the political economy of imperialism and class have been borne out in practice.¹⁹ This study will explore the extent to which the relevancy of such theoretical and strategic perspectives apply in the case of South Africa's national liberation struggle.

Non-Marxist theories of revolution virtually ignore the dialectic of struggle that is central to this study. Instead, the theoretical starting point has invariably

focused on the individual or a social collectivity thereof, emphasizing individual/collective values within a structural functionalist sociological perspective (see Johnson, 1966; Gurr, 1970). For theorists like Gurr, revolution revolves around the character and degree of people's responses to what he calls 'relative deprivation'; revolutionary activity is thus reduced to how the frustrations and anger of certain sectors of the populace play themselves out in a context of response-counter response. Johnson on the other hand attempts to explain revolutions by reference to (violent) battles involving the political legitimacy of core social values; revolution becomes a (pure) competition about societal values between protagonists. The general framework for these non-Marxist approaches sees revolution as a systemic disequilibrium of normally stable social systems.²⁰

It is sufficient to point out that the extremely narrow frame of reference for these theories (i.e. individualist, uni-political) cannot, in any way, give a sound analytical and interpretive base for the study of revolutionary organization and activity. As numerous scholars have noted (Kaplan, 1973; Aya, 1979; Skocpol, 1979; Goldstone, 1982), such theories emanate from a contextually hostile (mostly Cold War) view of revolution and revolutionary change; as such, they provide little in the way of further understanding of the subject and its 'ordinary' participants. Moreover their approach almost completely ignores the structural context within which revolutions take place as well as the role and motivation of those that are oppressed. In my view these theories represent little more than theoretical constructs bound up in what can only be called a cultural determinism. It can thus be appreciated why such theories have lost their applicability if they ever had one.

The final body of theory concerning revolution and national liberation that needs to be addressed, while having several 'branches' to it, falls under what I would broadly

call a neo-Marxist framework. As will become clear, I choose the term 'neo-Marxist' because these theoretical contributions, while borrowing from certain aspects of Marxist (and Leninist) theory, end up utilizing decidedly different referential and analytical terrains from which conclusions about revolution and revolutionary activities are derived.

Of this broad neo-Marxist literature probably the best known works are those of Charles Tilly (1978) and Theda Skocpol (1979). Tilly utilizes what has been called a 'political-conflict' approach to the study of revolution. For Tilly, the main component for understanding and interpreting revolutionary situations and activity is an ongoing competition (contestation) for central political power. Central to this framework is a dominant analytical focus on participatory organizations (revolutionary groups and the existing state), where the contest eventually creates an alternative center of power (multiple sovereignty). According to Tilly, revolution will succeed when people finally "obey" this alternative body.²¹

Skocpol generally agrees with Tilly's framework as a means to identify and explain some of the reasons for, and ability of, the contending classes and their respective organizations to act in a revolutionary situation. However, for Skocpol the dominant factor in any analysis and explanation of revolution is structural. As she confidently states:

Revolutionary situations have developed due to the emergence of politico-military crises of state and class domination. And, only because of the possibilities thus created have revolutionary leaderships and rebellious masses contributed to the accomplishment of revolutionary transformations.²²

Because of this perspective, Skocpol rejects what she calls "purposive" or "volunterist" perspectives of revolution (she identifies a "unilinear" Marxism-Leninism as the prime

example), which argue that political formations and/or mass organizations actively create the conditions for revolution.

Two other prominent features of Skocpol's perspective on revolution are: the need to factor in a "transnational" perspective; and a conception of the state as a "coercive and administrative" organization that is "autonomous from, but conditioned by socio-economic interests and structures."²³ In regard to the last point, Skocpol attacks Marxism as adopting an "instrumentalist" conception of the state by identifying the state as representative of the dominant classes in society. In her view, this does not allow for raising the possibility of fundamental conflicts of interest between the dominant classes and the existing state (presumably in revolutionary situations), a situation in which autonomy is required.

Besides Tilly and Skocpol, there are two other theoretical approaches that fall within the neo-Marxist framework. Firstly, there are the 'dependency/world-system' theorists, represented by people like Andre Gunder Frank (1969, 1979) and Immanuel Wallerstein (1974, 1979). The main arguments made concern the "extent to which the society in question is subject to economic, military, or political pressures from other states and from changes in the world system."²⁴ While these theories do not specifically concentrate on revolutions and revolutionary activity, many of the arguments made concerning the historical geo-politics of the 'Third World' (e.g. the effects of colonialist trade) are relevant to analyses of revolution.

Secondly, there are those theorists whose studies have highlighted the role played by the peasantry/agrarian classes in revolutions (see Wolf, 1969; Paige, 1975; and Scott, 1976). Often arguing that the activities of rural populations have been ignored in studies of revolution, these theorists have attempted to analyze and interpret the specific role of peasants/agrarian classes in liberation movements. The character of interactions with other class

formations (including the state) is given added analytical weight.

While the contributions of theorists such as Tilly, Wallerstein, and Scott are useful they all, in one way or another, are bounded by their own limited frames of reference. There can be little doubt that specific studies of organizational competition, agrarian classes, or global political economy, as applied to the study of revolution, are both appropriate and helpful. However, none of these theoretical contributions can fundamentally address the complexities of the dialectic I have argued is central to analyzing and understanding revolutionary situations, organizations, and activity. The only theoretical study of revolution that claims to make the linkage between structure and struggle (objective-subjective), and thus provide a more 'wholistic' view of revolution, is Skocpol's.

The strong point of Skocpol's analysis is her identification of the centrality of structural conditions in interpreting revolution. However, there are two reasons why Skocpol's approach is both limited and, despite denials to the contrary, instrumentalist. Firstly, Skocpol's almost singular attention to, and definition of, the character and role of the (autonomous) state (as constitutive of 'structure'), circumscribes her ability to fully interpret the relative importance and 'place' of the state. Her argument concerning the autonomy of the state ignores the discontinuities of both form and practice (of the state) that accompany parallel structural changes in the given society. Unlike Skocpol, a Marxist approach to the state allows us to see the dialectic (often 'flexible') relationship between the state and dominant classes in varying socio-political situations, as well as the revolutionary possibilities of changes to the form of state (without degenerating into reductionism). It is indicative of Skocpol's own instrumentalism that she cannot theorize the contextual possibilities of changes in state forms

(ultimately reflected in practice), which in turn transform the character of 'structure'.

Secondly, Skocpol's state-centric approach produces an analysis which reduces the role of struggle (i.e. subjective activity) to a component of either organizational participation or the state. This reductionist theorizing is thus not able to provide insights into the myriad struggles of the ordinary 'mass' which are often not the result of organizational activity/participation. Likewise, the activities of the state, and in particular its responses to revolutionary activity, become analytically bound to a structuralist interpretation. Like Johnson, Skocpol slides into a perspective of revolution which sees competition between autonomous structures as the prime factor of analysis (and thus prescription).

Other than this specific critique of Skocpol, there are two other shortcomings of the neo-marxist framework that, I would argue, are essential to any analysis and understanding of revolution and revolutionary activity:

- although there is the recognition of the importance of international factors (e.g. Skocpol) the emphasis is placed squarely on the state and the internal 'society' as the recipients for such pressures etc. Little mention is made of the effects of such pressures/activities on liberation movements themselves (this omission is of particular importance with regards to a movement such as the ANC which was predominantly externalized). Comparative studies of revolutions have also exhibited this tendency (Gibson, 1972; Friedland, 1980; Greene, 1984).
- while the logic of these approaches offers an analytical distinction between revolutions and other forms of political change (e.g. rebellions, coup d'etats etc.) the category of national liberation is left ambiguous. Thus, in the case of the Rhodesia/Zimbabwe national liberation struggle there were all the ingredients of an ideological program, mass activism, and political transformation

etc. (i.e. of revolution) but no fundamental transformation of social relations or class structure.³⁵ This has led to an analytical and practical conflation of revolution and national liberation which, I believe, is a major failure in neo-Marxist 'revolution' literature. Within a 'new' international situation where forces of liberation face increasingly harsh obstacles in achieving radical social transformation there is the need for incisive theoretical analysis that is able to dissect means and ends.

In addition to these three traditions, there is a rich body of scholarship that focuses on imperialism as central to any analysis of revolutionary activity and potential (Lenin, 1935; Fanon, 1963; Magdoff, 1969; Kolko, 1969; Baran & Sweezy, 1971; Amin, 1977; Syzmanski, 1981; Chomsky & Hermann, 1979; Callinicos, 1991). Although this body of theory is by no means homogenous in its approaches or prescriptions, a recognition and analysis of imperialism is, I believe, essential to a contemporary study of national liberation struggle. I would argue that there has been a premature and often conscious disregard of the usefulness and force of imperialism as an analytical tool in recent years.

With the continued transformation of global capitalism and endless conflicts around class, nation, and race it would only be intellectually prudent to suspend the ongoing funeral arrangements for theories of imperialism. These theories provide a conceptual apparatus for exploring the process of transnationalization of economic, political, ideological, and military structures. By identifying the logic of power and analyzing the activities of those with the capacity to exercise that power on a global scale, theories of imperialism have transcended time-specific application. One weakness though, is the tendency to overlook the ways in which imperial policies affect the strategies of externalized (internationalized) national liberation movements. These issues will be dealt with forcefully in later chapters.

One final note revolves around the centrality of violence to most studies of revolutionary struggle. This is the case with the writings of both revolutionaries (e.g. Lenin, 1977; Giap, 1980; Guevara, 1987; Cabral, 1979) and academics (Arendt, 1965; Johnson, 1966; Calvert, 1984; Tilly, 1978; Turok, 1980). Although it is true that some level and degree of violent conflict is inherently associated with any sort of revolutionary struggle, other non-violent forms of activity that might be utilized by liberation movements are downplayed. In the case of the ANC's externalized struggle it then becomes clear that the effectiveness of, for example, the financial sanctions campaign would have little in the way of an explanatory base.

As this study will show, the ANC/SACP's strategic approach to revolutionary struggle, while committed to armed struggle from 1961 onwards, was constitutive of many different forms of non-violent activity. Following the strategic and tactical history of this struggle allows us to see the conjuncture of structural conditions and subjective choices that led to the utilization of numerous and differing forms of non-violent activity. I would argue that it is especially important to give more prominent analytical priority to the actual practice and potential of non-violent revolutionary activity given the changed international (and national) environment since the mid-1980's.²⁶

Looking at the ANC

In surveying the literature on the history of the ANC's struggle there emerges a clear differentiation between studies conducted by academics and those by ANC members/sympathizers. In addition, there has been a proliferation of articles (the vast majority written within South Africa) on the ANC since its unbanning in 1990.

Those academic studies that generally fall within the 'historiography' of the ANC cover, in some detail, the

period up until the mid-1980's (Feit, 1962; Walshe, 1971; Friedland, 1980; Karis, 1983; Lodge, 1983/1985). The focal point of all these analyses are on the internal history of the ANC, the domestic conditions to which it responded, and how these conditions have affected the organization's structure and program. There are two general shortcomings related to this literature: firstly, little mention is made of the centrally important dialectic with which this study is concerned²⁷; secondly, these works are limited by the time frames they cover, unable to analyze the full historical panorama of ANC politics.

Similarly, studies carried out by ANC members/sympathizers follow the same general line (Meli, 1988; Holland, 1989; Mbeki, 1992). As might be expected from such studies, there is a general lack of both a critical perspective and any serious theoretical grounding.²⁸ It is one of the more glaring gaps in the literature dealing with the ANC that these 'internal' studies represent the only available 'history's' of the ANC. This situation only reinforces the dire need for a critical historical treatment of the ANC that analyzes central issues of theory and practice, of the national and international.

The few studies that have focused on the external environment within which the ANC has operated (Magubane, 1981; Pomeroy, 1986; Lodge, 1988; Esterhuyse, 1990) do so from a very generalized (and often purely descriptive) perspective. While Lodge's article reveals a keen appreciation of the conditions of exile and their potential effect on strategy and tactics, the general analyses are limited by both time and theoretical depth. As a result, these studies are useful for short-term illumination but do not offer a systematic perspective of the ANC's externalized-cum-post 1990 struggle.

Some of the more generalized literature on guerrilla struggle and exile politics (Grundy, 1971; Johns, 1973; Marcum, 1978/1979) is more helpful in contextualizing this

study. The most recent works that have dealt with ANC organizational and armed struggle politics (Barrell, 1990; Ellis & Sechaba, 1992), provide useful (and heretofore unavailable) information but rarely venture beyond the descriptive.

Of the recent literature that has followed the 1990 unbanning of the ANC, the vast majority falls within the boundaries of comradely organizational critique (e.g. Mbeki, 1991; Suttner, 1992; Desmond, 1993; and in the pages of the *African Communist* and *Work in Progress*)⁹. Much like their earlier cousins, these studies remain bounded by the authors political positions and the specificity of time within which they are located.

There are other recent works (Callinicos, 1992; Alexander, 1993; and articles in *Searchlight South Africa*) which offer polemical critiques of the ANC that, amongst other things, rightfully draw attention to organizations that have been ignored as the ANC has taken center stage.¹⁰ As much as these studies fill a gap by raising critical organizational and strategic questions about the ANC, they too are limited by their reference points of time and place (i.e predominantly post-1990 and domestic).

It is only long-time ANC analyst Tom Lodge (1993) who has presented one of the few scholarly contributions, albeit brief, that attempts to draw out the lessons of the ANC's exile years while simultaneously assessing its performance since its unbanning. Because Lodge's article does not come from 'within' the ANC/SACP it allows for a somewhat critical interpretation of the activities of the ANC; all the more important to engendering healthy debates and studies around the organization and leaders who now hold dominant political sway in South Africa (something this study is associated with). Unfortunately, Lodge does not offer any in-depth analysis of past and more recent strategies and tactics of the ANC/SACP, which leaves a predominantly descriptive contribution that is useful but extremely limited.

Structure and Struggle

As to be expected, a study of this nature draws theoretical inspiration from a wide variety of sources. Many of those who fall under the broad category of neo-Marxism have provided extremely useful and important insights and guidelines for analyzing and understanding revolutionary organizations and practice. However, I would argue that these theoretical contributions, in one way or another, draw basic sustenance from classical Marxist theory. If approached and drawn upon in a constantly fluid and creative way, classical Marxism provides a breadth of reach that is difficult to surpass.

Casting a critical global eye over the last decade a strong case can be made that classical Marxist theories concerning capitalist society, social change, and social conflict remain as relevant as ever. Despite recent events in the former USSR and Eastern Europe, events that many see as proof of the bankruptcy of Marxism, we only have to critically look at the last four years to reach a radically different conclusion. I would argue that what collapsed was a historically and spatially specific political and economic system (central bureaucratic commandism); a critical Marxist theory that informs a creative praxis under ever-changing objective conditions remains relevant.

Much as has been the case in South Africa for decades, the vast majority of humanity are either directly or indirectly suffering under a capitalist dominated political economy. To the extent that there have existed, and continue to exist, variants of classic western capitalist society, so too will the sustainability of these 'systems' be dependent on basic freedoms and material benefit for the vast majority. It would seem highly irrational to announce the timely 'death' of classical Marxism, specifically as it applies to revolution, when all around our globe it is clear that there exists the reality of capitalism and social

conflict. Herein lies the durability and utility of classical Marxist theory: it links "the causes and consequences of revolution directly to the historical emergence and transcendence of capitalism."³¹

This does not mean that struggles for liberation are helpless hostages to the dominant economic and political structure, just as they are not merely reducible to the activity of individuals. Rather, they are "conditioned by changing structural economic conditions, state reforms and repression, international acts, imported ideas, leadership debates, and efforts to learn from mistakes."³² It is this combination of structure and struggle, set within a historical context that informs this study.

In subjecting the strategy and tactics of the ANC and SACP to a critical, historically-informed analysis, I have adopted a chronological approach to my study as the best means of illuminating the dialectic which informs both past and present struggle.

In order to provide the necessary historical background to this study, the second chapter presents a brief record of colonial (both English and Afrikaner) conquest and the introduction of capitalism in South Africa. It was within this historical mold that the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party were born and their early politics shaped. The subsequent strategic approach to liberation of both organizations is investigated, cast as it was against the backdrop of ongoing worker militancy in the 1930's and 1940's. Most importantly, it was the defeat of a working class-led socialist alternative, directly linked to ANC and SACP strategy and tactics during these formative years, that catalyzed the rise of an ANC Youth League determined to solidify a decidedly narrow nationalist approach to struggle. To give content to this perspective, the ANC Youth League Programme and the Freedom Charter are critically analyzed alongside the practical struggles waged during the 1950's. In an attempt to critically assess this

period of struggle, the relative 'successes' are looked at in reference to their mass content and strategic goals.

Chapter 3 highlights the period 1960-75, with special focus on the role of the SACP. An analysis of the events leading to the banning, exile, and turn to armed struggle of the ANC and its allies takes cognizance of the power and effect of subjective interpretation and choice. This is placed within the context of continuity with past strategies, the prevailing objective conditions and the role and place of mass struggle. Similarly, the question of externalization is analyzed in light of the geopolitical and material realities facing the liberation movement, and questions posed as to its practical effects. Particular attention is given to the development and consequent effect of the SACP's two-stage theory of revolution on the strategic direction and content of the liberation struggle. The importance and outcomes of the ANC's 1969 Morogoro (Tanzania) conference is then discussed as part of the increasing hegemony of SACP theory and strategy, pointing the way to an emergent consistency of the logic and practice of an ANC-led struggle for national liberation.

Chapter 4 begins by casting attention on the structural economic and social crisis of apartheid capitalism that provided fertile ground for the student and worker struggles of the mid-1970's. The 1976 Soweto uprisings are analyzed with reference to the varying roles played by the ANC/SACP and the Black Consciousness Movement; and the effects of the resultant exodus of youth into the external structures of the ANC/SACP are examined. A resurgent sabotage campaign and the apartheid state's response are discussed with reference to an ANC strategy fundamentally infused with a bounded yet contested externalization. Attention is also paid to the issue of ANC/SACP relations with prominent actors on the international stage. Specific mention is made of the analytical content (or lack thereof) of liberation movement strategy, and how this begins to substantively affect the

direction of struggle. The chapter closes with a look at the character of an increasingly militant internal opposition and the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF).

Chapter 5 specifically deals with one of the main issues taken up in this study, i.e. the dialectic between the objective conditions within which the ANC and the SACP conducted their liberation struggle and the choice of strategy and tactics the organizations pursued. Focusing on the mid-1980's internal uprisings, the apartheid state's reactive attempts to 'control' the situation, and the proceedings of the ANC's Kabwe (Zambia) Conference the discussion attempts to unravel a central question: how and why were a series of intensely radical struggles under extremely harsh conditions ultimately undermined by movement strategies that purportedly provided the basis for the realization of the aims of those struggles? In addressing this question, the specific role of agency, in the form of the leadership of the ANC and SACP, takes center stage. Concluding this chapter is a brief discussion of international and regional events during the late 1980's, accompanied by an analysis of the effects of these on both the liberation movement and the apartheid state.

Departing somewhat from the chronological sequence of the study, chapter 6 takes up the specific issue of the internationalization of the South African liberation struggle. Here, the spotlight falls on the strategies and practical activities of institutions of capital (e.g. financial sanctions) and how these relate to the politics of an externalized national liberation movement operating within an imperialist framework. In doing so, the continuities and contradictions of ANC and SACP strategy are profiled, particularly as they relate to internal "mass" constituencies. The main public documents released by the ANC during the late 1980's, revealing an increasingly solidified commitment to a negotiated "revolution", are scrutinized within a historical perspective, as is the

ascension to the position of South African President of the reformist leader of the white minority National Party, F.W. De Klerk.

The contextual significance of De Klerk's speech on February 2, 1990 is the starting point in chapter 7 for assessing the 'new' period of formal negotiated 'struggle' that it ushered in. In turn, the subsequent domestic and international response of the ANC-led Alliance to the first stages of this period is analyzed as constitutive of a historically located strategy of accommodation which was now a captive of its own logic. Taking the various agreements between the Alliance and De Klerk's regime as discussion points, the focus shifts to the ways in which the politics of negotiation differentially served both the objective and subjective 'interests' of the respective protagonists. Special mention is given to the organizational activities of Alliance leaders and membership, revealing distinct ruptures between programmatic content and the accompanying practical response to ongoing struggle. The overall 'outcome' of this period is conclusively sited within the harsh realities of a bounded strategic approach to struggle that I will argue, effectively delivered an equally bounded liberation.

The study concludes by offering theoretical and practical arguments for why the dialectic of the ANC and SACP's liberation struggle has led to a substantive disempowerment of the "mass" constituencies in whose name that very struggle has been waged. The all-inclusive negotiated settlement signaling the 'end' of apartheid and the consummated 'victory' of the liberation struggle is critiqued within the context of the ANC/SACP's basic goal of struggle - a "transfer of power to the people" - and found to be woefully truncated. Above all, it is argued that no meaningful liberation can even hope to be realized as long as guiding strategies attempt to reconcile the priorities of the "people" with the competitive and exploitative priorities of capital.

NOTES

¹Meaning "the struggle continues."

²Because of the incredibly close relationship between the SACP and the ANC since 1950 (when the SACP was banned), it should be noted that I will not always distinguish between the two but rather make predominant use of the term ANC as encompassing the SACP as well. Where there is a specific need to demarcate the policies/activities of the two I will refer specifically to the SACP by name.

³The TEC is the political body created through negotiations between the South African government and the ANC-led opposition movement that acted as the facilitator for the April 1994 elections. After much "horse-trading" following the three-day national election (April 27-29, 1994) the ANC was declared the winner with just over 62% of the vote, and subsequently represented the largest party in the new national government as well as in seven of the nine provincial governments.

⁴In conducting research for this study it became clear that the vast majority of written work dealing with contemporary liberation struggle has failed to grasp the nettle of the kind of critical intellectual endeavor mentioned. In many cases it is quite obvious that the authors have presented their subject matter from a perspective wholly uninformed by active engagement with those at the center of the author's investigations. In other cases studies are so transparently apologetic for one "side" or another, that it is hard to consider their content or conclusions seriously.

⁵National liberation has always been the stated bottom goal of the ANC and its partner the SACP. However, there have been many times when this alliance (especially after the incorporation of the Congress of South African Trade Unions - COSATU - in 1986) has put forward the ultimate goal of socialism for South Africa. Although this strategic goal is associated more with the SACP and COSATU (in itself a debatable issue) rather than with the ANC itself, there has been such an overlap of membership that to completely disassociate the goal of socialism from the ANC is, I believe, a convenient omission. This is not to say that the ANC has ever had a coherent strategic program grounded in socialist ideology, but rather that large parts of the ANC's constituency have put forward a socialist vision. Whether or not this has filtered through to the ANC leadership and informed the strategy and tactics of the organization is an entirely different matter.

As will be made clear in my arguments the ideological orientation of the ANC, as expressed through its leadership structures, has followed a pattern of what I will call 'incorporation' - such a pattern represents strategic ideological choices by the ANC, rather than an undulating (and self-propelled) tactical terrain.

⁶All modern liberation movements have had varying degrees of an external presence. The need for international resources and rear bases for guerrillas, has made externalization a virtual necessity of struggle. However, in almost all cases, the importance of externalized structures and struggle has been reduced as the movements have secured internal bases and support. Certainly, the degree and duration of the ANC's externalization goes beyond that of any other 'modern' liberation movement.

⁷The other three pillars being - waging an armed struggle, building an underground presence within South Africa, and strengthening legal mass mobilization within the country.

⁸An important distinction needs to be made here - between the indisputable fact that the ANC became, during the 1980's, the most prominent South African liberation organization, and the assertion often made by the ANC and its international supporters that the ANC was the 'sole representative' of the oppressed in South Africa. As will be addressed later, this tendency has led most of the international community to ignore the rich and varied strands of struggle that make up (and continue to do so) the South African liberation landscape.

⁹From Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (New York: International Publishers, 1970), p.20-21.

¹⁰Colin Bundy, "History, Revolution, and South Africa," in *Transformation* 4, (1987), p.64.

¹¹V.I. Lenin, "Letters on Tactics," in *Lenin: Collected Works*. Vol.6 (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1977), p.33.

¹²Both of these 'requirements' are central to the writings of the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci. See Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971).

¹³A more extended discussion of these, and other, 'requirements' is set out in Colin Bundy's article "Around Which Corner?: Revolutionary theory and contemporary South Africa," in *Transformation* 8, (1989), pp.14-18.

¹⁴Such a reading of Marxist theory has seemingly become hegemonic since the fall of the former USSR and Eastern European 'socialist' countries and this is nowhere more the case than in South Africa itself [see for example Johnny Steinberg, "Leninist fantasies and SACP illusions: A Response to Kitson and Slovo," in *Work in Progress*, No.74 (May, 1991)]. It stems, in my opinion, from pre-disposed ideological affinities of such critics, and the tendency to conflate the practice of those who have acted in the name of Marx, with the richness of Marxist theory.

¹⁵See in particular V.I. Lenin, "What is to be Done?" and "The Proletarian Revolution and Kautsky the Renegade," as well as K. Marx,

"The Civil War in France," all in *A Handbook of Marxism* (New York: International Publishers, 1935).

Gramsci also falls within the broad boundaries of this tradition. His concepts of 'wars of position' and 'wars of maneuver' can be interpreted as recognition of the importance of both structure and ideas, although the way in which he posed these questions led him in different strategic directions than Lenin.

¹⁶V.I. Lenin, *"Left-Wing" Communism - An Infantile Disorder* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1950), p.69.

¹⁷V.I. Lenin, *Revolutionary Proletariat and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1947), p.64.

¹⁸In identifying the dialectical relationship between structure (i.e. capitalism/imperialism) and struggle (i.e. those who participate in revolutionary activity), Marx and Lenin were pointing to the need for an all encompassing analysis. In relation to this study then, any analysis of the effect of 'international factors' must be applied not only to the state and internal social forces, but also to those movements that act in the name of the oppressed. This then requires that the activities/pressures of representatives of capital both international and domestic should be specifically applied to the ANC.

¹⁹'Proof' of this can be clearly seen in the majority of post-colonial 'liberations' in Africa (e.g.'s Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria etc.). There were varying degrees of political revolution which delivered an indigenous ruling class (both capitalist and state/military bureaucratic), that perpetuated and further facilitated (albeit in new forms), capitalist accumulation at the expense of the majority of their populations.

²⁰Bundy (1987), p.66.

²¹See Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading, Ma.: Addison-Wesley, 1978); Also see Bundy (1987), p.67. Some of the further comments on this neo-Marxist body of theory are informed by the summary that Bundy provides in his article.

²²In Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p.17.

²³Ibid., p.14.

²⁴As quoted in Bundy (1987), p.67.

²⁵See Ibid., p.61-62. For an analysis of the Zimbabwean 'revolution' both before and after independence see Andrew Astrow, *A Revolution that lost its Way?* (London: Zed Books, 1983).

²⁶Almost every major liberation struggle in the post World War II era has been caught up in the 'Cold War' paradigm, leading to the provision of armaments as befitted the interests of either 'superpower'.

The ANC/SACP struggle was no exception, but beginning in the mid-1980's with the rapprochement between the US and the USSR, followed by the subsequent disintegration of the Soviet empire, things changed. The new international environment has the potential, for a variety of reasons, to minimize the use of large-scale violence for purposes of any liberation struggle.

²⁷The one exception to this is the work of Tom Lodge who has been the most consistent academic observer of the ANC for the last two decades. Lodge does attempt to look at some of the conditions of the ANC's exile environment, but by his own admission his investigations have been limited.

²⁸The one beneficial aspect of such efforts has been to give voice to those who previously had been prevented from doing so. It has only been since the 1990 unbanning of the ANC that any work dealing with the ANC has been allowed public distribution within South Africa.

²⁹The *African Communist* and *Work in Progress* have been the two main sources and outlets for progressive writing in South Africa in the last three years (supplemented by another journal - *Transformation*). In my opinion, the existence of so few literary outlets in a country such as South Africa is in itself a source for concern.

³⁰Although there has been a great deal of heated debate centered around the strategy and tactics of the ANC since its unbanning very little has been put in print for widespread public consumption. That which has found its way into the greater public arena has come from longtime critics of the ANC. While there have been many 'internal' ANC documents circulated for debate within the organization, these have stayed within a fairly small circle of intellectuals/activists. As a result, both the larger ANC membership and academics/activists abroad have had only vague ideas about the extent and character of criticism/debate around ANC strategy and subsequent policy.

³¹Skocpol & Trimberger, "Revolution and the world-historical development of capitalism," in B.H. Kaplan ed., *Social Change in the Capitalist World Economy* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1978), p.122 as quoted in Bundy (1987).

³²See Anthony Marx, *Lessons of Struggle: South African Internal Opposition, 1960-1990* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p.27.

CHAPTER 2
EARLY HISTORY AND STRUGGLE: THE FORMATIVE YEARS

...it is of less importance to us whether capitalism is smashed or not. It is of greater importance to us that while capitalism exists, we must fight and struggle to get our full share and benefit from the system.¹

Dr. Xuma - President-General of the ANC (1945)

From the time the Dutch decided to open an outpost at the Cape in the mid-1600's, to service their increasingly important Europe-India trade route, a historical process was set in motion that has produced one of the world's most enduring conflicts. From their initial role as providers of fresh produce for the passing sailors, the white settlers soon embarked on the wholesale dispossession and partial extermination of the local Khoikhoi pastoralists and San hunters, notwithstanding the fierce resistance they encountered. The settlers gradually moved inland dispossessing and subjugating the indigenous population in the ever expanding search for expansive tracts of fertile land and freedom from the colonial authority which had by now set up administrative shop in the Cape colony.²

After the implementation of British control of the Cape colony in 1806 there began the dual oppression of ever increasing numbers of indigenous peoples. On the one hand there were the independent-minded descendants of the Dutch (now beginning to form a distinct national/cultural identity as 'Afrikaners/Boers'), who wanted to escape limited economic opportunities and what they perceived as 'liberal' racial policies in the Cape colony; and on the other the

rapacious appetite of an ever-expanding British imperialism/colonialism. Many of the Afrikaners who had been living in the Cape colony moved inland on what has come to be known as the 'Great Trek'. Unlike the Afrikaner myth of the trek as an all-conquering white 'army', the settlers gradually made their way inland through a combination of military setbacks and victories, as well as a great deal of trading and deal-making with local indigenous populations.³

Throughout the nineteenth century wars of dispossession were mounted against the various kingdoms of the Xhosa, Tswana, Pedi, Sotho, Venda and Zulu (amongst others) by both the Afrikaners and the British. Parallel to these various fights against the white settlers/colonists, were ongoing conflicts and movement amongst the various indigenous peoples themselves. Starting with the *Mfecane* (Zulu for 'crushing') in 1818 when Zulu King Shaka embarked on an expansion of the Zulu 'state', serious social and geopolitical upheavals reverberated throughout the sub-continent. Many people were absorbed into the Zulu 'state' while others regrouped in new locations and reestablished themselves as functioning kingdoms.⁴

The combination of colonialist advance (both militarily and commercially) and the ongoing rivalries and disputes within the indigenous population, produced a uneven process of resistance and subjugation. Some people such as the Pedi (situated along the Eastern Cape seaboard), became involved in migrant labor as early as the 1840's and were gradually absorbed into the expanding colonialist empire; others, such as the Zulu and Sotho managed to remain independent as kingdoms until the 1870's, holding off the colonialist advance through a combination of astute economic and political cooperation and military prowess.⁵

Faced with vast disadvantages in military technology, cross-cultural unity, and geographical dispersion the

majority of the indigenous peoples offered stiff resistance to their inevitable defeat. Despite all of the internal and external problems experienced by the indigenous peoples, the history of this period would stand out as a beacon of pride and struggle to future generations.⁶

With the 'discovery' of diamonds in the Kimberley area in 1867 followed by gold in the Witwatersrand area in 1886, the South African colony was thrust headlong into a new era of capitalist accumulation. Within a few years much of the political, economic, and social landscape had been transformed beyond recognition. Alongside a wave of new white immigration came a massive influx of capital and capital goods necessary to exploit and process the vast accumulation of wealth taking place. As could be expected, this capitalist invasion brought with it more efficient forms of oppression for the majority of the indigenous peoples, large sections of which became wage workers on the mines or generally labor fodder for expanding capitalist enterprises.⁷ The British colonial apparatus (urged on by international financiers and budding private/settler capital) launched an aggressive policy of increased political/administrative control over the South African hinterland in order to facilitate the control and use of African labor.⁸

This process of capitalist expansion in South Africa is distinguishable from other African colonial conquests, in that it created both the largest, most concentrated, and wealthiest white settler community and black working class on the continent (circa late 1800's). The creation of large cities around the mining compounds (e.g. Kimberley's population went from virtually nil to over tens of thousands in the space of 2-3 years), was the beginning of large-scale urbanization of the indigenous population, something that only began to take place in other African nations well after

colonial independence.⁹ From 1874 until the late 1880's "an estimated 10,000 African laborers were employed annually" at the diamond mines.¹⁰ After the gold mines were in full production, the number of African workers employed between 1890-1899 "increased from 15,000 to an estimated 107,000."¹¹

With this increased urbanization and proletarianization came the first opportunities for the nascent African working class (already administratively and physically separated from white workers) to organize themselves. While there were some efforts to do so, the character of working class 'industrial relations' consisted predominantly of ad-hoc wage negotiations or moving from place to place in order to secure higher wages and better conditions. Even these efforts were increasingly circumscribed by the demands of competing and expanding mining companies on the colonial administration to ensure an abundant, and controlled workforce.¹²

Not surprisingly, the British imperialists wanted sole control of this prize colonial possession, a desire that came up against the Afrikaner vision of carving out their own independent African empire. This mutual greed led to what has come to be called the Boer War at the turn of the century. After intense fighting and the use of brutal methods of control (e.g. the use of concentration camps for the Afrikaners), the British eventually prevailed. In the process, however, they created an Afrikaner community whose messianic vision of rightful control over the land and its indigenous inhabitants would lead to their eventual political ascendancy. In the midst of all these 'brotherly' feuds over the spoils of capitalist exploitation the vast majority of indigenous peoples played the role (albeit unwillingly) of economic pawns, creating the wealth over which they had no control.¹³

Soon after the Vereeniging 'peace'¹⁴ between the Afrikaners and British, a new round of accumulation and exploitation resumed. This necessitated even greater political and economic control over the indigenous population and black workers who provided the vast pool of cheap labor needed to underpin the ever-expanding mining and industrial base. Mining companies and newly formed manufacturing industries began to make vociferous demands on the colonial administration to adopt stricter measures to control African labor; and it was the mining sector which desperately wanted to find new ways to secure cheaper labor due to increased competition and the internationally fixed gold price. Parallel to this was the influx of rural Afrikaners to the larger cities in search of work, a situation that created more demands for racial privilege and protection.¹⁵

Practically, this meant a concerted assault even on those limited political and economic rights that Africans had managed to retain (e.g. freehold land title, limited voting rights in the Cape colony, and varying freedom of movement in urban areas). The next few years saw a series of new laws designed to meet the political and economic interests of both the general white population and those of an expanding and greedy capitalism.

The draft South Africa Act, published in February 1909, was the opening shot in the battle to legally institutionalize racialized social engineering. South Africa would become a Union (of provinces) with virtually all political and economic power in white hands, and thus with the ability to institute wide-ranging measures in order to facilitate control over all aspects of African life. The draft Act was formally adopted in 1910 as the Act of Union by the newly constituted South African Parliament.

This was soon followed by a series of other racially based Acts during 1911-13. Some of the main Acts passed included: the Dutch Reformed Church Act excluding blacks from membership; the Mines and Works Act for the protection of white workers; the Immigrants Restriction Act; the Native Labour Regulation Act to control black laborers; and the Defence Act establishing the basis for an all-white force.¹⁴ While all of this discriminatory legislation imposed further enslavement and humiliation on the African population, it was the measures implemented in the lead-up to passage of the Native Land Act (1913) which proved to be the spark which spurred the formation of the first national organization devoted to opposing the racial order - the African National Congress (ANC - initially named the South African Native National Congress).

The main reasons for the passage of the Land Act were threefold: firstly, the desire of the expanding industrial and mining sector to take away land rights for Africans so they would be 'available' as cheap wage labor; secondly, to create living and economic conditions in which Africans would be forced to resort to migrant labor, by demarcating small and marginal 'Native Reserves' as living space; and thirdly, the growing opposition of white commercial farming interests and rural Afrikaner farmers (which included many who had lost their land/livelihood due to the war) to the presence of African squatters, sharecroppers, and land-owners who were 'competing' for land and, of course, material benefit.¹⁷

As some analysts have pointed out, a growing number of African land-owners were producing food cheaper than most white farmers, and there were burgeoning business opportunities for other African rural dwellers (e.g. transporting goods) which took much business away from whites (predominantly Afrikaners). This rural African petite

bourgeoisie were also able to compete very favorably on the 'market' due to social/family networks which often allowed for more effective use of labor power.¹⁸ This situation of continued growth and economic empowerment of an African petite bourgeoisie also engendered a socio-political outlook which identified more closely with British 'civilization' and an emergent 'free market' capitalism. In short, there was every reason for industrial capital, Afrikaner politicians, and white farmers to smash (or at least suppress) this new class.

The Land Act not only satisfied the accumulative demands of the capitalists and white farmers but it also effectively ended the growth of what had been an expanding and relatively successful class of small African commercial farmers. By forbidding Africans to purchase or lease land outside the newly designated 'Native Reserves' (bantustans), which comprised only 13% of all land in the country, the Land Act was attempting to close the main available avenue of petite bourgeoisie class formation open to Africans¹⁹; and it was from this class that the leadership of the ANC were to come.

During this time there had been various regional/localized attempts at organization (e.g. Natal and Transvaal Native Congress) and protestation over lack of black economic and political opportunities which were fast eroding under the racialized legislative onslaught. The formation of the ANC on 8 January, 1912 in Bloemfontein, represented the first serious attempt to establish a national forum to address the political and economic situation of the black population. As has been widely chronicled,²⁰ the majority of the members and certainly the leadership was drawn mainly from the newly emergent black petite bourgeoisie as well as the traditional chiefs whose interests were also tied to the availability and use of land by Africans. This petite

bourgeoisie group wanted to find ways to stem both the assault on their own class interests (and movement), as well as on what they perceived as the general political and economic well-being of Africans.

In this endeavor the majority of the new ANC leaders not only brought with them their particular class politics but also a heavy dose of Christian education and corresponding mores. This led to a perspective that incorporated both a politics of non-violence and of incorporation; i.e., the main priority would be to persuade the 'civilized' British that the educated, propertied, and 'civilized' Africans could be incorporated into the mainstream of South African society. Additionally, the ANC leaders saw the limited Cape franchise, in which Africans qualified for the right to vote or be elected on the basis of their wealth, as their goal. As one scholar has put it, the formation of the ANC was:

a reactive act, attributable to disappointment and anger with the white government's failure to deal 'responsibly' with its African subjects. Its mode was to re-act and object to unfavorable governments acts using constitutional channels.²¹

This has led some to dismiss the early ANC as nothing more than a 'bowl in hand' organization that did nothing to challenge the status quo. While there has been a tendency to overplay the 'radical' potential of the early ANC, its contribution to a nascent sense of national consciousness should not be ignored. This contribution is best exemplified by the following appeal from one of the ANC's leaders, P.I. Seme:

The demon of racialism, the aberrations of the Xhosa-Fingo feud, the animosity that exists between the Zulus and Tongaas, between the Basutos and every other Native must be buried and forgotten; it has shed among us sufficient blood! We are one people. These divisions, these

jealousies, are the cause of all our woes and of all our backwardness and ignorance today."²²

However, the politics of the early ANC was far from radical. All of their early political efforts centered around attempts to persuade both the British and South African governments to provide relief by constitutional means. When it became clear to the ANC leadership that the South African government was not interested in their pleas, they dispatched deputations and delegations to London, with the vain hope that the colonial power would side with the 'Africans' in their grievances against the 'Boer' government of South Africa. The ANC leaders pleaded for the application of the British sense of "fair play and justice" which the "Africans as loyal British subjects," would greatly appreciate.²³

After giving their general support to the Allied cause in World War I, the ANC continued their politics of deputations. However, after a delegation had visited London in 1919 it finally became clear that the British were not going to intervene. Having no strategies other than those they had now exhausted, with not a single concession gained, the ANC literally began to fall apart. As Peter Walshe has said:

...the support of the chiefs ebbed away, membership stagnated and later declined, and Congress began a long struggle through a quarter of a century of political frustration and organizational weakness that at times all but overwhelmed it.²⁴

During this time period the mining and agricultural sectors expanded at a brisk pace. One by-product of this was the increased proletarianization of the African labor force.²⁵ In the years following World War I South African industry grew at a rapid pace as did the workforce. "Between 1915-1916 and 1919-1920, the numbers of factories rose from 3998 to 6890 and factory employment by 73%." ²⁶ There was also

the formation of organizations which to varying degrees represented sections of this growing working class (both white and black): the International Socialist League (ISL); the first African union under the name Industrial Workers of Africa (IWA); the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU); and in 1921 the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA).

Despite carrying out several strike actions, the largest of which was the 1920 mineworkers' strike, and intermittent campaigns against discriminatory laws (e.g. the anti-pass law campaign by women in the Orange Free State province), this expanding, but as of yet fairly politically inactive working class, played a minor role within the ANC, whose leadership consciously spurned organizing amongst the mass of Africans.²⁷ Meanwhile, the system of racial discrimination was further entrenched as racial capitalism²⁸ delivered the goods with perverted efficiency.

The 1930's and 1940's: 'Front' Politics and Lost Opportunities

By the mid-1930's the ANC was a terribly weak organization. A large part of this state of affairs can be attributed to the continued erosion of the ANC's active social base. This situation was directly linked to the effects of government legislation like the Land Act and unfavorable economic conditions (the depression) during the 1920's and early 1930's. These conditions impacted negatively on the material and organizational well-being of the ANC and its members/sympathizers. In addition, I would argue that another main reason for the sad state the ANC found itself in was as a result of the ways in which the ANC leadership responded/reacted to increased political and economic oppression instituted by the white minority

government. The continued and dominant strategy of attempting to persuade and court the 'masters' was both futile and disempowering.

Many of the ministers, urban intellectuals, traditional chiefs, landowners, and small entrepreneurs that had formed the organizational core of the ANC had turned to more narrow professional/business pursuits, or been absorbed into the expanding state administration. As far as the ANC's social support base, the independent African peasantry, was concerned, the cumulative effects of the Land Act and worsening economic conditions had forced many back into a 'survival mode' wage labor and subsequently reduced their more immediate ability to engage in organized political activity²⁹. The main question that was being asked by many ANC veterans was what, if any, attempts should be made to revitalize the organization. Some leaders, like the CPSA's J.B. Marks were already pronouncing the ANC "literally dead."³⁰

The active-dormant stages that the ANC went through during the 1910's and 1920's were to foreshadow a similar pattern throughout the history of its struggle. What this initial period reflected was the dialectic of struggle set out in the previous chapter. It was a dialectic that encompassed a combination of changing structural conditions (i.e. objective social conditions), and the general strategic/organizational response to these conditions from the ANC's leadership. As long as there was some sort of immediate crisis or new law to be opposed the ANC responded with differing degrees of activity and resistance. However, once their responses had either been harshly suppressed, undermined by co-optation, or had failed on their own terms the ANC lapsed into a state of near paralysis until the next round of favorable circumstances presented themselves.

This is not to say that the ANC did nothing in between (e.g. deputations, delivering petitions, organizing meetings etc.), but rather that the organization's reluctance and/or perceived inability to set about the task of long-term grassroots organizing amongst the masses of South Africans presents itself as a hallmark of ANC strategy and tactics.

This lack of grassroots organizing can be traced to two main factors; firstly, the dominant petite bourgeoisie class interests of the ANC leadership (selected land ownership, access to capital, a 'free market,' etc.), to be secured by limited participation in a bourgeois Parliament, did not lend themselves to close identification with the interests of workers and unemployed; and secondly, the conscious strategy of adopting a politics of accommodation bound the interests of the ANC much more closely to those classes who held the reins (or had greater access) to political and economic power. As we shall see this has had its own particular logic and effects on the possibilities and potential for realizing any genuine national liberation in general, and for radical transformation in particular.

Given the parlous state of the ANC as an effective political organization, the general sullen character of the liberation struggle, and the confidence with which the white government was acting, there was the dire need for new initiatives and political direction. More than anything else, it was the increasingly oppressive political and economic measures taken by white minority big business in alliance with the government (contained in the newly passed Hertzog Bills that further entrenched white political and economic power and ownership and increased methods of social control over the majority) that spurred the ANC to participate in the convening of the All Africa Convention (AAC) at the end of 1935.

Participation in the AAC, which brought together for the first time Coloreds, Black Nationalists, Communists, and Trotskyists, was a marked departure from previous ANC practice which had generally confined itself to a narrow blacks-only policy. One of the more significant results of this 'opening up' of the ANC was to put the ANC, for the first time, in at least indirect alliance with the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), a relationship that was to prove increasingly influential on the ANC.

The AAC was really the first attempt to bring together a wide range of anti-racist organizations and individuals in some sort of loose alliance in order to resist the ever-more restrictive and oppressive ravages of racial capitalism. In many ways, this represented an organizational step forward in the struggle against white capital and the government. However, this was only insofar as the resultant strategy and tactics also moved forward from what had already been attempted and had failed to seriously mobilize direct challenges to the system. Unfortunately, it soon became clear that the leading elements (predominantly from the ANC) in the AAC were seemingly more interested in larger numbers to carry out the same activities as before, rather than any substantive and forceful rethink of strategy and tactics.

In short, the AAC remained stuck in the stale strategy of deputations and faith in superior moral arguments. While there were those in the AAC (mostly the Trotskyites) who pushed for a more radical approach to action (e.g. boycotting the newly formed Native Representative Council), the end result was a politics of accommodation.³¹

Such politics of accommodation, albeit pursued at a particularly youthful stage in the development of the liberation struggle, was to become a hallmark of the ANC and its future alliance partners. This can partly be explained by what has turned out to be an ageless tradition within the

ANC alliance and particularly its leadership - holding the firm belief that accommodating the widest possible spectrum of ideological and class interests, and attempting to suppress differences between such interests, will present the surest and shortest route to national liberation.

It was during the years 1936-1945 that the logic of this kind of liberation politics became the guiding principle behind the strategy of the ANC and in particular its alliance partner the CPSA. For its part, the CPSA had dutifully followed the dictates of its Moscow mentors by pursuing the strategy of a 'people's front' (later, during World War II to become a 'united front'). In theory, the 'people's front' strategy stressed the need to bring together all social forces that might play a positive role in furthering the demands of national liberation. In practice, it meant two things: first, sidelining the black working class as a major force for radical change in favor of 'progressive' white labor, 'liberal' British/international capital, and black African nationalism;³² and second, to identify socialism (i.e. working class politics) as a mostly foreign (white) ideology that was not appropriate to 'African conditions' and a general obstacle to national liberation of the black majority of South Africa.³³

Controlled by a moderate leadership unable to transcend its own limited vision, the ANC found common ground with the CPSA in their 'people's front' strategy.³⁴ Throughout the early 1940's this strategy led to support for the allied war effort and the active discouragement of militant mass action. As the following letter from Dr. Xuma (President General of the ANC) to General Smuts in 1942 stated:

We are alarmed at the number of avoidable strikes that have taken place recently. It also seems to us that the methods used to deal with some of the participants in these strikes are not calculated

to improve the situation...The use of soldiers and armoured cars against unarmed strikers may be wrongly misconstrued[sic] by the rank and file of our people...We deplore the occurrence of any strike at the present time, as we realise that they tend to impede the national war effort as well as to strain race relations between blacks and whites...We are anxious not to embarrass the government...We humbly and respectfully request the Prime Minister to receive a deputation from the ANC and CNETU (Council of Non-European Trade Unions)...to assist you toward settlement of recent strikes and prevention of future strikes.³⁵

Despite the active ANC/CPSA alliance strategy of limiting mass action, the years following the end of World War II saw extensive strikes by the black working class.³⁶ This took place within a context in which the white, predominantly English-speaking ruling class was seeking some sort of solution to both the potentially disruptive power of labor and the rise of Afrikaner political aspirations. Above all, the interests of white capital had to be protected and the 'cooperation' of black labor secured.³⁷ Since the program of the ANC/CPSA posed no real threat, it was the black labor movement that felt the brunt of state repression. The eventual defeat of the labor movement during the 1940's was situated in two factors that were outside its control: firstly, the class structure of South African society made it such that the "social weight of the proletariat as a force for democratic change was as yet insubstantial"; and secondly, the "weakness of liberalism as a political force within the ruling class and the decisiveness with which the ruling class as a whole attacked the organized labor movement."³⁸

By the close of the decade the South African liberation landscape looked decidedly barren. The black working class and labor movement were reeling under the defeats they had suffered, the 'people's front' of the ANC and CPSA remained stuck in an outmoded and failed politics of accommodation,

and the right-wing Afrikaner controlled National Party - promising even harsher suppression of the black population - had gained political control of the country in the 1948 white elections.

What emerged from this period was the decisive defeat of a working class-led socialist alternative to African nationalism in the struggle for South African liberation. Much of the impetus for this development lies on the doorstep of the CPSA and its policy of submerging independent working class organization and interests under the banner of a broad-based alliance with African nationalism as its guiding principle.³⁹ I would argue that, not only did such a strategy fundamentally weaken the black labor movement (and thus the black masses as a whole), but it created the conditions in which socialism was viewed as either inappropriate and/or an obstacle to the immediate liberation struggle - national liberation was thus analytically and practically circumscribed. As a result, African nationalism became politically and strategically hegemonic albeit in a more radicalized form. From here on, the ANC was to be the major vehicle for that new hegemony.

The Rise of Dual Nationalisms

By the end of 1949 there were two 'new' organizations that reigned supreme amongst their respective constituencies - the Afrikaner dominated National Party and the ANC, now dominated by its Youth League. The respective hegemony of these two organizations gave rise to an ever heightening duel of nationalist vision in which the respective nationalisms in many ways fed off each other.⁴⁰

After narrowly securing victory in the 1948 all-white elections Dr. Malan and his National Party quickly set about the task of instituting a range of laws and decrees that would deepen existing legalized racism and form the

foundation for the specifically Afrikaner version of apartheid. As many studies have shown (Lipton 1985, Bunting 1986, Fine and Davis 1990, Wolpe 1990, and Ticktin 1991) the impetus behind this development came from two sources: the need of the new National Party to secure the support of those sectors of white society (white working class, Afrikaner farmers, Afrikaner petite bourgeoisie) who were threatened by industrialization and further capitalist development; and the need to meet the new demands of such economic development (i.e. increased exploitation of the black labor force). Although the racism of the National Party and racial history of South Africa provided a firm foundation on which to construct apartheid, the historical development of apartheid has always had as much to do with class considerations as those of race.¹¹

In the space of less than two years the new government had introduced the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, the Immorality Act (prohibited inter-racial sexual relations), the Population Registration Act (national roll according to racial classification), the Group Areas Act (demarcating all land use according to race), and the Suppression of Communism Act (outlawing the CPSA and giving wide powers of silencing any person and/or organization seeking change).

At the same time, the National Party (NP) embarked on a program to ensure that Afrikaners would be given special economic privileges and security. The NP also nationalized key industries, putting them in the hands of the Afrikaner state and giving the nascent ruling class a powerful tool of accumulation and economic power. Although the National Party had verbally assaulted the power and privilege of English-speaking capital there soon emerged a quiet understanding that both stood to benefit from the 'new' apartheid program.¹² This "understanding" spread to international capital as well, whose principals were always in the market

for low-wage 'stable' environments in which to invest, especially when they knew their respective governments would support their business activities as anti-Communist patriotism.⁴³

Symptomatic of the supportive role played by international capital were the multi-million dollar loans extended to the National Party government during the 1950s, by the newly formed World Bank. After visiting South Africa on a 'fact-finding' mission in 1950 World Bank Vice-President Robert Garner reported that:

The Bank's mission to South Africa is satisfied that the loan would be perfectly sound, and highly desirable for the bank to make, since South Africa's development is regarded as highly important. The mission found South Africa a fine, strong country of fine people and the loan would be an excellent banking proposition. The mission has been impressed by the variety of South Africa's industrial development..., credit standing...and other sources of capital.⁴⁴

Such perspectives set the tone for what was to become large-scale involvement of international finance capital in the South African economy. The increasing integration of the South African economy into the global capitalist system would provide an important source of economic support for the apartheid state and a well of profit for international capital. However, as I will show in Chapter 6, South Africa's integration into the global capitalist economy would later prove a strategic godsend for an ANC struggle bereft of internal organization and 'success'.

Against the backdrop of the 1940's and with increasing internal political and economic suppression of the black population combined with a resurgent international anti-Communist imperialism, the ANC Youth League found fertile ground for its ideological and organizational coup d'etat. What the Youth League sought was a turn to mass struggle around a rejuvenated and 'pure' African nationalist

movement. They viewed previous failures of the ANC as a result of the invasion of liberal and socialist ideas that were out of place with their own idealized vision of an African nationalism which would reclaim a sense of African community and clearly identify the enemy as the colonial/imperialist invader. The program of the Youth League "was not designed to push the ...program of the African nationalist establishment beyond its liberal limits but rather to recapture the past in the name of an imagined community of Africans."²²

The Youth league had set out a new vision for the ANC and African nationalism in its 1944 manifesto. In their 'Statement of Policy' they stated,

The African, on his side, regards the Universe as one composite whole; an organic entity, progressively driving towards greater harmony and unity whose individual parts exist merely as interdependent aspects of one whole realising their fullest life in the corporate life where communal contentment is the absolute measure of values. His philosophy of life strives towards unity and aggregation; towards greater social responsibility.

Under the sub-heading of 'Our Creed' they wrote:

- We believe in the divine destiny of nations.
- The goal of all our struggles is Africanism and our motto is "*Africa's Cause Must Triumph*" (original emphasis)
- We believe that the national liberation of Africans will be achieved by Africans themselves. We reject foreign leadership of Africa.
- We may borrow useful ideologies from foreign ideologies, but we reject the wholesale importation of foreign ideologies into Africa.
- We combat moral disintegration among Africans by maintaining and upholding high ethical standards ourselves.

We believe in the unity of all Africans from the Mediterranean Sea in the North to the Indian and Atlantic oceans in the South - and that Africans must speak with one voice.⁴⁵

Conjuring up images of an indivisible and inalienable African nationalism, the Youth League made their move at the ANC's annual conference in December, 1949. Out went much of the old leadership and in came the young turks with their Programme of Action as the new beacon of the ANC.⁴⁶ In the Programme of Action the League had outlined what the demands of the ANC should be with the emphasis on seeking 'national freedom' and 'self-determination'. However, in terms of the political content of such demands the Programme remained firmly within the liberal democratic tradition. It called for "the right of direct representation in all the governing bodies of the country" and "the abolition of all differential institutions or bodies specially created for Africans."

The most important break with the old strategy and tactics though was the commitment to direct action and mass mobilization. The Programme called for the employment of "the following weapons: immediate and active boycott, strike, civil disobedience, non-cooperation and such other means" to accomplish their demands.⁴⁷ Underlying the Programme was the expectation that the 'masses' would naturally respond to these calls and in this expectation the League was not all wrong. Although the black working class and peasantry had been hard hit by the defeats of the 1940's and were staggering under the weight of the 'new' apartheid order, there remained an undying fighting spirit that was ready to be tapped. The League's vision and strategy for a radicalized African nationalism filled the gap.⁴⁸

Despite the stated hostility of many Youth Leaguers to the role of the CPSA it was not long before its members began to reclaim influence and position within the ANC. This

stemmed from two separate but equally important developments: the self-dissolution of the CPSA in 1950 (just after the passage of the Suppression of Communism Act) and its reconstitution in secret, although the ANC now became the main vehicle through which the CPSA worked (many white party members also joined the newly formed all-white Congress of Democrats (COD)); and the adoption by the CPSA of an ideological framework in which it argued for the strategic primacy of what it termed 'revolutionary nationalism' over socialism.

The CPSA made the argument that 'black' South Africa was a 'colony' of its white oppressors. Calling for a "revolutionary party of workers, peasants, intellectuals, and petty bourgeoisie" whose objective would be national liberation, the CPSA gave analytical and organizational content to what was to become known as the two-stage theory of struggle.⁴⁹

Setting the Boundaries of Liberation

Other than the 1950 May Day stay-aways (people not reporting for work), which proved the untapped militancy of the black working class as well as the harsh counter-measures white business and the state were willing to implement, very little mass action/struggle took place until 1952. In that year the ANC embarked on a national Defiance Campaign which was designed to repeal numerous government Acts passed since 1948 by bringing together, on a national level, various local grievances that emanated from disparate communities. Although the Defiance Campaign has most often been (simply) described as an important 'turning point' for the ANC towards mass action and confirmation of the ANC's 'radicalization',⁵⁰ the way in which the Campaign was

strategized and conducted raises serious questions about this interpretation.

Conceived as a non-violent mass action campaign to put pressure on the ruling class for reforms, the Defiance Campaign followed the same strategic logic as previous efforts (i.e. the belief that through moral argument and example the ANC could persuade the government to mend its ways). Despite the stated need to bring together the 'mass' of people in action, the core of the Campaign centered around the example of the national leadership volunteering to engage in non-violent civil disobedience.

There was little in the way of organizing the urban black working class, who were by far the most organizable section of the 'masses' due to their physical concentration in urban areas and general social conditions. This can be attributed to the character of the Campaign, the main feature being to court arrest through highly public acts of civil disobedience in which most workers could not afford to participate for obvious reasons. One of the distinguishing features of the Campaign was the grassroots involvement of women who vigorously protested the proposed extension of the pass-laws to women. This was an important development because women had been consciously left in the background of the liberation struggle; now their struggles placed gender issues on a liberation agenda dominated by patriarchal influences and practice.

Believing that a cautious, top-down, non-violent approach was the best (and only) way to conduct mass struggle, the ANC turned a potentially useful tactic into a strategic principle.⁵¹ Fearing the power of the apartheid state, arguing that the 'masses' were not prepared for militant confrontation, and still believing in moral suasion, the ANC recoiled from mass mobilization. The Campaign achieved none of the reforms it had demanded.

An argument can be made that the ANC leadership followed this strategic path for a number of 'rationale' reasons: a fear that militant action would be premature and unorganized; a belief that a more explicit challenge to the state would bring an extremely harsh response from the state which would potentially 'decapitate' the movement; and seeing the international situation as being particularly hostile to more militant activity on the part of a 'third world' liberation movement.

While each of these reasons can be seen as 'rationale' choices/responses to unfavorable existing objective conditions, I would argue differently; that the strategic choices made were the result of the specific way in which the ANC leadership 'rationally' forged its ideological and strategic approach to 'mass' struggle over a period of time. The possibilities of struggle present in the late 1950's (i.e. combining objective conditions and subjective purpose), rested precisely on the degree to which the leadership of the dominant social/political movement, the ANC, interacted with, and led the basic (materially located) struggles raised from the 'ground'. (It was the character of that process that related directly to the potentialities of change under fluid objective (material) conditions). The leadership's choice to privilege a static conception of the objective (ultimately reflected in practice), was disempowering of the rich possibilities of struggle.

In 1953 the logic of the ANC's nationalist program resulted in the establishment of what was to become known as the Congress Alliance. The four 'distinct national groups' (Black, White, Coloured, Indian) were represented in the Alliance by the ANC, the Congress of Democrats, the South African Coloured Organisation, and the South African Indian Congress respectively. Included in the Alliance were also the newly formed South African Congress of Trade Unions

(SACTU), and the predominantly white Federation of South African Women (FSAW). The irony was that the Alliance mirrored the racial categories of the apartheid state. National identification had come full circle.

Although the majority of the ANC leadership (there seemed to be little canvassing of the general membership's opinions) were clearly supportive of the formation of the Alliance, opposition did arise. Arguing that the Alliance's liberal 'multi-racialism' was undermining radical African nationalism, ANC Youth League members like Potlako Leballo and Robert Sobukwe opposed the ANC's participation in the Alliance. It was these men who were later to lead a splinter group out of the ANC and form the rival Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). There was also opposition from left critics of the ANC who, in the main, rejected the racial departmentalization of the liberation movement; instead they saw, in the organizational character of the Alliance, confirmation of the continuing retreat from class struggle and organization.⁵²

The first move of the Alliance was the decision to draw up the now famous Freedom Charter (see Appendix A) setting out its basic program and demands. Conceptualized as a document that would express the views of the 'people' of South Africa, the Freedom Charter was to become the guiding manifesto of the ANC alliance and eventually to be regarded by large numbers of the oppressed as representative of their aspirations.⁵³ Drafted by a sub-committee of the National Action Committee (a body set up by the Alliance for this specific task), the Charter has often been presented by the ANC as representative of the 'voice' of the people of South Africa. Despite the impressive number of people who participated in the Charter's public adoption at Kliptown in June 1955, the process by which the document was drawn-up and adopted involved a select Alliance membership.⁵⁴

Stating that South Africa "belongs to all who live in it" and calling for "a democratic state, based on the will of the people" the Charter set out a list of 'shall' demands.⁵⁵ These were grouped under the following headings: the people shall govern; all national groups shall have equal rights; the people shall share in the country's wealth; the land shall be shared among those who work it; all shall be equal before the law; all shall enjoy equal human rights; there shall be work and security; the doors of learning and culture shall be opened; there shall be houses, security and comfort; there shall be peace and friendship. The underlying purpose behind each of these general demands was to respond to what ANC President Albert Luthuli called "the conditions that obtain: harsh, oppressive, and unjust conditions."⁵⁶ Indeed, the Charter came at a time when the apartheid government was consolidating its discriminatory legislation and conducting an increasingly concerted assault on organized forms of opposition both local and national.

The adoption of the Freedom Charter as the ANC's primary political and economic program represented two important developments: first, it codified the ANC's commitment to an accommodationist strategic approach to national liberation. Stressing the need for a multi-class character to the struggle for national liberation, and for what can only be called consensual politics, the Charter provided the logical foundation for a strategy of ideological and class accommodationism.⁵⁷ The concept of the 'people' came to be seen primarily as constituent of all social classes divided along racial lines. National liberation was strategically separated from social liberation. Racially defined national liberation assumed strategic center-stage and was to guide the ANC's approach henceforth.³⁶

Secondly, it represented a particular ideological 'party-line'. Despite the claims (and the bent of the language in the Charter) by the ANC Alliance that they constituted a 'national movement', the Charter was the specific programmatic reflection of a political organization seeking a prominent role in governing the country (i.e. a party). The conscious fusion of this party program with an all-inclusive national 'will' provided the ANC with the basis to claim a national mandate, not subject to the scrutiny and democratic processes associated with the principle of popular, mass-based party politics.⁵⁹

The demands of the Charter did offer a stated alternative to apartheid and provided an important rallying point for opposition to it. However, in its desire to gather all social forces into its fold, the Congress Alliance left much of the Charter open to widespread interpretation. So, for example, the clause demanding that the 'people shall share in the country's wealth' has been interpreted in a host of ways: the apartheid state, and subsequently much of the black working class and unemployed, have seen the clause as meaning the appropriation of large-scale private capital to a new majority-controlled state; some South African socialists have seen visions of worker-controlled 'people's' committees in alliance with a friendly state running the economy; many nationalists have foreseen a 'mixed-economy' where both the state and private capital share the driver's seat, redistributing resources to correct apartheid imbalances, and so on.

Similarly the demand that 'the people shall govern' was open to ambiguous interpretation. For the ANC the word 'people' was conceptualized as meaning all those with an interest, whatever the motivations, in ending apartheid. In a 1956 article in the South African journal *Liberation*, Nelson Mandela confirmed such an understanding:

The Charter does not contemplate (socialist) economic and political changes. Its declaration 'The People shall govern' visualizes the transfer of power not to any single social class but to all the people of the country, be they workers, peasants, professionals, or petty bourgeoisie.⁵⁹

This ambiguity in the Charter's clauses meant that the ANC Alliance could claim that their strategic approach was simultaneously a predominantly nationalist anti-apartheid umbrella for all social forces, and a revolutionary struggle for radical socio-economic transformation.⁶⁰ The main problem was that the ANC's desired end, as expressed by Mandela, contained no requirement for the means needed to fulfill the second claim (i.e. providing organizational and ideological content to the struggle of the only social force capable of forcing such radical change - the black working class).⁶¹ It was the combination of a relatively unorganized, disparate, and weak/tired working class (as outlined earlier) and the chosen strategies of the ANC, that weakened any possible 'leading role' of the working class.

The adoption of the Freedom Charter was not well received by the apartheid government. Seen as confirmation that the ANC (controlled by 'white communists') was bent on the 'violent overthrow' of the state, the Charter sent the apartheid machinery into a new round of activity. Utilizing the Native Labour Act of 1953, the apartheid state began to arrest labor leaders and attempts were made to seriously limit the scope of activity of labor resistance. Pass-laws were enforced with greater zeal and effectiveness and the white authorities vigorously pursued the ethnic fragmentation and control of the non-white population under the Group Areas Act. In its concerted attack on the Congress Alliance the state arrested almost the entire leadership in 1956, charging them with treason for the attempted overthrow of the government. This set in motion the infamous Treason Trial, in which over one hundred leaders of the Congress

Alliance including all the leading figures in the ANC such as Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu, were put on trial by the apartheid state. The trial dragged on until 1960, culminating in most all the senior leadership being found not guilty for lack of evidence.

The apartheid onslaught was generally ignored by the international community. Multi-national corporations were quite content to invest in the mining sector and the expanding industrial sector as long as the environment remained 'stable' and profits kept rolling in. Major western governments prioritized the apartheid state's strategic anti-Communist appeal over any moral concern for apartheid policies.⁴²

In response to both the apartheid state's offensive and local socio-economic conditions there was a noticeable upsurge in oppositional activity. Boycotts, limited strike action, stay-aways, anti-pass actions, rural revolts, and public demonstrations all took place during the late 1950s. What was noticeable about this activity was that much of it took place without a great deal of direction from the ANC.⁴³ Local organizations (many affiliated or sympathetic to the Congress Alliance) showed immense resourcefulness and courage in the face of heavy state repression. There were many factors that led to the lack of ANC involvement, among them being the leadership's general 'absence' as a result of the treason trial, but it was once again the ANC Alliance's strategic priorities that played a major role.

Underlying much of the ANC's approach to the militant activity underway was the decision to woo white liberal support for the anti-apartheid stance of the Alliance. As part of this accommodationist approach the ANC decided to support the (white) parliamentary opposition parties (the United Party and Labour Party) in the upcoming 1958 (all-white) elections. Fearing the alienating effects on white

liberal and middle class opinion and seeking to preserve the unity of broad social forces within the Alliance, the ANC leadership continually sought to limit the scope of mass militancy.⁶⁴ Going so far as to retreat from the demands contained in the Freedom Charter, and taking black 'mass' support for granted, the ANC strategy helped create the conditions whereby the designated 'masses' were greatly weakened. Despite the ANC's efforts, the National Party won a majority in the elections, the white opposition was severely mauled, and militant action by the black working class and other 'mass' forces was given a sharp blow.⁶⁵

None of this seemed to deter the ANC from its chosen strategic direction. At the 1958 annual ANC conference the organization adopted a Constitution in which the 'Aims and Objects' of its struggle were: "to unite the African people in a powerful and effective instrument to secure their own complete liberation from all forms of discrimination and national oppression; to promote and protect the interests of the African people in all matters...; to strive for the attainment of universal adult suffrage and the creation of a united and democratic S.A. on principles outlined in the freedom charter; and to support the cause of national liberation and right to independence of nations in Africa and the rest of the world."⁶⁶

By the end of the 1950's the ANC had achieved 'success' on numerous fronts: raising its liberation profile; forging a broad alliance of social forces to confront apartheid; and adopting a progressive document with radical potential. However, it had also helped create conditions in which the possibilities of transcending accommodationist politics were made extremely difficult. The militant struggles of the black working class and other sections of the oppressed majority did not have a chance against both the ANC and the apartheid state, even if other more structural factors had

played a role in their defeat.⁶⁷ The ANC, all denials to the contrary, was firmly planted in a strategy of seeking national liberation through social forces whose interests were diametrically opposed to anything other than limited political and economic reform.⁶⁸ The mutations, rationalizations, and consequences of this strategy form the essence of the ANC's externalized struggle which was a great deal closer to happening than anyone expected at the end of the decade.

NOTES

¹From the Xuma Papers Microfilm Collection (London: Institute of Commonwealth Studies) ABX 45080/d, as quoted in Robert Fine & Dennis Davis, *Beyond Apartheid: Labour and Liberation in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1990), p.52.

²It is still necessary to point out that as the white settlers made their way inland they had to forcefully dispossess/subjugate the indigenous inhabitants, who although scattered over large areas, were resident on the land taken. Reiterating this historical fact is necessary since to this day there are those like Eugene Terreblanche of the neo-Nazi Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (Afrikaner Resistance Movement) who, in the name of white claims to land and a perverted sense of their own indigenusness, continue to purvey the historical lie of a virgin inland to which the white settlers laid claim.

For analyses of this period see Edward Roux, *Time Longer than Rope: A History of the Black Man's Struggle for Freedom In South Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966); and Leonard Thompson, *A History of South Africa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

³A concise and accessible discussion of this historical period and of the trek can be found in Nigel Worden, *The Making of Modern South Africa: Conquest, Segregation and Apartheid* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), pp.11-18.

⁴See John Pampallis, *Foundations of the New South Africa* (London: Zed Press), pp.3-7.

⁵See *Ibid.*, pp.7-13.

⁶For a more general overview of this period see Thompson (1990). For a specific look at the valiant efforts of the Xhosa people to ward off the colonists see Timothy J. Stapleton, *Maqoma: Xhosa Resistance to Colonial Advance* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 1994).

⁷This process of increased racial and class polarization and exploitation is excellently chronicled and analyzed in Jack Simons and Ray Simons, *Class and Colour in South Africa: 1850-1950* (London: International Defense & Aid Fund, 1983).

⁸See Worden (1994), pp.19-20.

¹See Simons & Simons (1983) as well as Luli Callinicos, *A Place in the City: The Rand on the Eve of Apartheid* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1993). While these two studies effectively deal with the issue of proletarianization during the late 1800's and early 1900's they seem to be the exception. Unfortunately, there has been a tendency among historians of South Africa to underplay the seminal importance of this development. The fairly large scale proletarianization (by contemporary colonial standards) of indigenous peoples at this early stage of the colonization process forever altered the landscape of struggle which was to proceed.

It should also be noted that this capitalist expansion encompassed many beyond the borders of what was then the South African colony. Indigenous workers came from all over the sub-continent to work on the mines, providing the first link in what was to become an increasingly dependent economic relationship between South Africa and its neighbors.

²As quoted in Martin Murray, "The Development of Capitalist Production Processes: The Mining Industry, the Demand for Labour, and the Transformation of the Countryside, 1870-1910," chap. in *South African Capitalism and Black Political Opposition* (Cambridge, Ma.: Schenkman Publishing Company, 1982), p.128.

³Ibid., p.130.

⁴This and other detailed information on the mining industry is contained in Alan Jeeves, "The Control of Migratory Labour on the South African Gold Mines in the era of Kruger and Milner," in Murray, ed. (1982), pp.137-171.

⁵For a good overview of the Boer War see Thomas Pakenham, *The Boer War* (New York: Random House, 1979). Also, Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa: The White Man's Conquest of the Dark Continent from 1876-1912* (New York: Random House, 1991), is a good broad historical treatment of European colonialism both in South Africa and the rest of the continent. For a classic theoretical analysis and explanation of modern imperialism see J.A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*, 3rd ed. (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988).

⁶After the Anglo-Boer War the Treaty of Vereeniging was signed in May, 1902. This treaty set the stage for the eventual 'independence' of South Africa from Britain and the political ascendancy of the Afrikaners.

⁷See Pampallis (1991), chp.2; and Worden (1994), pp.39-41.

⁸In addition, there was already a 'pass-system' in place which functioned as a control mechanism for the movement/employment of the black population. A discriminatory poll-tax was also in force.

¹⁷ See the discussion by Colin Bundy, "The Emergence and Decline of a South African Peasantry," in Martin Murray, ed. (1982), pp.228-230; and in Worden (1994), pp.48-49.

¹⁸ See Bundy (1982); and the discussion by Francis Wilson, "Farming, 1866-1966," in M. Wilson and L. Thompson, eds., *The Oxford History of South Africa*, vol.2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp.104-171.

¹⁹ See Bundy (1982), p.228.

²⁰ See Govan Mbeki, *The Struggle for Liberation in South Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 1992), chp.1; Frances Meli, *South Africa Belongs to Us: A History of the ANC* (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1988), chps. 1-2; and Peter Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa: The African National Congress (1912-1952)* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971), chp.1;

²¹ In Elena V. Dorabji, "South African National Congress: Change from Non-Violence to Sabotage between 1952-1964," PhD. Dissertation, University of California - Berkeley (Ann Arbor, Mi: University Microfilms, 1983), p.34.

²² 'Imvo Zabantsundu' (24 October, 1911), in Thomas Karis and Gwendolyn Carter, *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa 1882-1964* (Stanford: Hoover Institute, 1972), vol.1, p.72.

²³ In Meli (1988), p.47.

²⁴ In Peter Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa: The African National Congress (1912-1952)* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971), p.65.

²⁵ See endnote number 3 as well as A. Lerumo, *Fifty Fighting Years: The Communist Party of South Africa (1921-1971)* (London: Inkululeko Publications, 1980), chps.1-3; Baruch Hirson, *Yours for the Union: class and community struggles in South Africa 1930-1947* (London: Zed Press, 1979); and Merle Lipton, *Capitalism and Apartheid: South Africa, 1910-1986* (Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 1985).

²⁶ As cited in D.E. Kaplan, "The Politics of Industrial Protection in South Africa," in Murray, ed., (1982), p.303.

²⁷ There had been some organization amongst the white working class. The formation of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) in 1921 had led to white workers striking and agitating for a new government based on the Soviet model. However, many of these early communists were no less racist than those they wanted to replace, having

marched under banners proclaiming: 'Workers unite for a white South Africa'.

²⁸The term 'racial capitalism' has found widespread use amongst many South African analysts and activists to describe the peculiarly South African version of exploitation and accumulation practiced by white minority capital and government. Even though formal apartheid was not instituted until after the election victory of the National Party in 1948, most of the elements of a racially defined labor and social system designed to service the needs of capitalist accumulation were well entrenched long before. See endnote number 19.

²⁹See the discussion of the 'People's Front' in Chapter 2 of Fine & Davis (1990).

³⁰In Ibid., p.48.

³¹It was during these debates over tactics to be pursued that there began to arise within the ANC a younger generation of African intellectuals/professionals who wanted to go beyond what they perceived as the outdated politics of deputations and white liberalism. This nascent bloc within the ANC was later to find expression in the ANC Youth League.

³²While the CPSA was following the 'people's front' strategy as an obedient member of the Third International (Communist), the core of the ANC leadership would no doubt have seen the strategy as fitting in with their own vision of a (predominantly) elite-led national liberation movement. Such a vision (as partially captured in the opening quote of the chapter from ANC President Dr. Xuma), would thus be more inclined to prioritize links and tactical alliances with 'liberal' capital and the black petite bourgeoisie than a consistent and firmly grounded strategic prioritization of the leading role of the black working class.

³³This line of argument is set out with infinite clarity and force by Fine & Davis (1990). As they point out, the people's front' was explicitly a 'people's front' of the CPSA and not a 'people's front' "sui generis." (p.39). Many writers have 'blamed' the failed strategy of deputations and compromise wholly on African nationalism but as Fine says, the CPSA shoulders at least equal blame.

The historian Baruch Hirson, an active Trotskyite at the time, makes the argument that the CPSA's strategy was predominantly responsible for holding South Africa's liberation struggle hostage to the dictates of Stalin's 'socialism in one country' approach (Baruch Hirson, interview with the author, October, 1992). Many in the Trotskyist movement were the closest to the black working class during this period working through organizations such as the Worker's International League and the Progressive Trade Union Group. There were other, more explicitly political groupings as well, such as the Worker's Party of South Africa, the Fourth International Organisation of South Africa, and later the Non-European Unity Movement. The clashes with the

CPSA over socialist strategy during the 1930's and 1940's have proven to be one of the enduring features of South African left politics.

³⁴It was during the war years, in 1943, that the ANC Women's League was formed. Although the ANC had committed itself to a policy of equal status for women in the organization, the all male ANC leadership kept the Women's League under its thumb and the League's functions were extremely limited. See Cheryl Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 1982).

³⁵Xuma papers (ABX 42 1229) cited in Fine and Davis (1990), pp.46-47.

³⁶The best known strike of this period was the August, 1946 strike by mineworkers on the Witwatersrand. Estimates as to the number of workers involved vary from 50,000 -100,000. The strike was put down violently by the state followed by the arrest of almost the entire Central Committee of the CPSA who were charged by the state for their part in fomenting an "illegal strike." These charges arose more out of the state's own pre-disposition to anti-communism and the need to act publicly rather than the actual minor role played by the CPSA in the strike.

³⁷In practice what such 'cooperation' meant was the realization on the part of the white ruling class and capital that their very existence and enrichment depended on finding ways to control and co-opt the black working class (and/or its representatives/leadership). This dilemma was to underlie the creation of the apartheid system, the eventual crisis of apartheid and the realization of its limitations, as well as moves to find new ways of doing the same thing in different forms.

³⁸Fine & Davis (1990), p.99.

³⁹I do not mean to imply that the CPSA was solely responsible for this development. Indeed, there were many people in the leadership of the labor movement and in other socialist groupings who, for various reasons, went along with these developments or criticized from the sidelines. However, it was the CPSA which chose to integrate itself so closely with the ANC and thus to identify with the decidedly middle-class character and struggle of that movement. The strategic entry point of the CPSA to the working class, and the working class' subsequent contact with the CPSA brand of socialism, was thus both potentially limiting and deradicalizing from the start.

⁴⁰Breuilly (1985) as cited in Fine & Davis (1990), p.75 has made the argument that "nationalism is a parasitic movement and ideology shaped by what it opposes." Far too many chroniclers of the South African struggle have tended to virtually ignore the parallel growth of Afrikaner and African nationalism.

⁴¹In this light the historical development of South Africa has been labeled 'racial capitalism'. For extended discussions on this see

Martin Legassick, "South Africa: Capital Accumulation and Violence," in *Economy and Society* 3, No.3 (1974), pp.253-291.

⁴²For the most comprehensive treatment of the historical relationship between these two apartheid 'players' see Duncan Innes, *Anglo-American and the Rise of Modern South Africa* (London: Heinemann, 1984).

⁴³I have chronicled some of the history of western capitalist support for the apartheid regime in these early years in *United States Foreign Policy Towards South Africa: Continuity and Contradiction 1960-1985* (M.A. Thesis: University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill, 1986). Also see Kevin Danaher's useful book, *The Political Economy of United States Policy Toward South Africa* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985).

⁴⁴In Martin Legassick & Dave Hemson, "Foreign Investment and the Reproduction of Racial Capitalism, An Anti-Apartheid Movement Pamphlet" (London: 1976).

⁴⁵ANC Youth League Manifesto (1944) as cited in Nelson Mandela, *The Struggle is my Life*, 2d ed. (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1990), pp.12-19.

⁴⁶The one exception was the election to the Presidency of Dr. Moroka (after Z.K. Matthews had declined the first nomination). Dr. Moroka was one of the wealthiest African landowners in the country and certainly didn't qualify as 'new blood'. Moroka was later to reveal just how much of a 'moderate' he was when he refused to fully endorse the mass actions of the organization and publicly distanced himself from those actions in his trial for civil disobedience. However, many of the main posts went to Youth Leaguers like Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, and Oliver Tambo although there was some continuity with the old leadership through men like Chief Albert Lutuli, Z.K. Matthews and CPSA members such as Moses Kotane and David Bopape.

⁴⁷ANC Youth League: Programme of Action (1949) as cited in Mandela (1990), pp.28-29.

⁴⁸In the Programme of Action the League gave little emphasis to organizing the working class or peasantry other than including a general call for a new workers' organization to "improve their standard of living," and an exhortation to "develop" the African reserves and establish enterprises for "employment."

⁴⁹See "Nationalism and Class Struggle", extract from the Central Committee Report to the National Conference of the Communist Party in Johannesburg, 6-8 January 1950, in SACP, *South African Communists Speak* (London: Inkululeko Publications, 1981), pp.200-211.

As Fine & Davis (1990), p.113 have argued, "this distinction (between a socialist movement struggling for socialism and a revolutionary nationalist movement struggling for national liberation)

was vital for the forms of organization and activity which the party was to support, its effect being to divide artificially the democratic and socialist aspects of the struggle into two separate compartments." What this practically meant was the subordination of class struggle and organization to the primary task of building a broad nationalist coalition of social forces to achieve the primary objective of national liberation.

³⁰See for example the 'official' and 'unofficial' histories of the ANC in Meli (1988), and Heidi Holland, *The Struggle: A History of the ANC* (London: Grafton Books, 1989) respectively.

³¹I am not implying that non-violent struggle is principally wrong or some how inherently non-radical. Where there is space for such tactics it should be used, and the ANC did so. However, it was the strategic approach and conduct of the Campaign that ensured that other forms of struggle engaged in by militant sections of the oppressed were either disregarded or actively suppressed.

There were many instances, particularly in the militant Eastern Cape region where workers embarked on wildcat strikes or called for indefinite general strikes with the support of local ANC leadership, in response to the victimization of Campaign participants. In the case of the call for an indefinite general strike the national leadership of the ANC intervened to halt such activity and replace it with a one-day protest strike [See issue of *Drum* (October, 1952)].

It is interesting to note that much the same thing happened after the Boipatong (a black 'township' outside Johannesburg) massacre in 1992, where workers called for an indefinite strike only to be undercut by the ANC alliance leadership's decision (after lengthy consultations with state and business leaders) to hold a two-day protest stayaway.

³²Much of the left critique though was unfortunately sectarian. Organizations like the Non European Unity Movement (NEUM) derided and chastised the ANC for what they saw as 'collaborationist' politics and lack of a class outlook. However true these criticisms were, the NEUM in particular devolved into a fetishism of 'non-collaboration' while simultaneously organizing itself as just a different version of collective nationalisms with little effort given to organizing for the only real alternative to accommodationist nationalism - an independent working class movement.

³³Throughout the next few decades the ANC held up the Freedom Charter as the defining expression of their programmatic appeal. As we shall see, the first test of the ANC's practical commitment to these verbal demands came after their unbanning in 1990.

The fact that many South Africans came to regard the Charter as a generalized expression of their aspirations in no way means, as the ANC alliance has claimed throughout the years, that it embodies the 'will' and 'voice' of the people. For such glorified treatments of the Charter and its subsequent history as the ANC's guiding document see Reginald Mpongo, "Twenty Five Years of the Freedom Charter," *Dawn* 4, No.6 (June, 1980), pp.4-10. [Dawn was the monthly journal of Umkhonto we Sizwe - the

armed wing of the ANC); and Raymond Suttner & Jeremy Cronin, *30 Years of the Freedom Charter* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1985).

⁵⁴Tom Lodge (1983), p.72 makes this point and it is confirmed by one of those who was on the sub-committee - Ben Turok. Turok was responsible for drawing up what are considered to be the 'nationalization' clauses of the Charter and much of the economic aspects of the document. The 'nationalization' clauses have always proved to be the most contentious aspect of the Charter and this is no surprise since Turok was taken to task by other Alliance members at the time for what was evidently considered to be an excess 'radicalism' and lack of consultation. Baruch Hirson has said that the entire process was a project of a select number of CPSA (Congress of Democrats) cadres. [Ben Turok, interview with author, October, 1992; and Baruch Hirson, interview with author, October, 1992]

There was also the effect of state repression that took its toll on the ability of the Alliance to canvass and involve large numbers of people. Fine & Davis (1990), have also argued that the Charter was not widely debated and the process, as a whole, was more of a successful political mobilizing tool than anything else (pp.139-147). At any rate, it is obvious that the claims of mass involvement are at least grossly exaggerated.

⁵⁵I call them 'shall' demands because almost every demand in the Charter is preceded by the word "shall". In reality, the Charter represents more of a wish-list than anything else. See Appendix A for text of entire Charter.

⁵⁶Albert Luthuli, *Let My People Go* (Glasgow, Scotland: Fontana Books, 1978).

⁵⁷The main features of this accommodationist approach, although inclusive of racial groupings in South African society, were focused on class and ideological elements. Some 'Africanist' members of the ANC criticized the Charter for its multi-racial approach, a criticism that in reality reflected a reactionary version of African nationalism which most Alliance members were right in rejecting.

In reference to the consensual politics mentioned, Colin Bundy has also stressed this enduring characteristic of the ANC: "It succeeded because the organization was able persuasively to stress common, overarching interests, while blunting and even suppressing differences" (cited in Hein Marais, "Political Progress may undo the glue unifying the ANC," in *Business Day*, 18 September, 1991).

⁵⁸The effect of this development has been reflected in the way in which the ANC has consistently claimed, particularly in the international arena, that the Charter and subsequent policy represent the national aspirations of the South African people. This reduced the scope for critical debate and policy formulation within the ANC and in the ranks of its domestic & international supporters.

⁵⁹As cited in William Pomeroy, *Apartheid, Imperialism, and African Freedom* (New York: International Publishers, 1986), p.167.

⁶⁰See for example the argument by Sam Nolutshungu, *Changing South Africa, Political Considerations* (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1982), pp.198-199:

the mode of domination in South Africa...establishes an interest for all blacks in the removal of the structures of domination. Nationalism expresses that interest -directed as it is primarily against the ideological and political terms of the reproduction of capital...Although it is perfectly true to say that the ultimate interests of the black workers and the black "middle class" are different and contradictory, it does not follow that the area of common opposition to the state form may not produce a struggle that is revolutionary - undermining the existing political and ideological supports of capitalism without being able to establish alternative ones...It is in this sense that a nationalist movement can be revolutionary....

⁶¹The formation of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) in 1955, and its subsequent membership in the Congress Alliance, was heralded by the Alliance as a practical expression of the commitment to working class organization and activity. However, the reality of the formation of SACTU and its subsequent leadership was that of an adjunct trade union affiliate to the Congress Alliance - the trade union wing of a political 'party'. Baruch Hirson has called SACTU a "dummy union". Whatever the truth of that opinion it is hard to see SACTU as an independent organization representing the specific interests of the black working class, although there were certainly SACTU affiliates like the Textile Workers who did so. The way in which SACTU, and subsequent Congress-aligned umbrella union formations developed raises serious questions about a nationalist approach to liberation of the working class.

⁶²See Dale McKinley, "United States Foreign Policy Towards South Africa (1969-1986): Continuity and Contradiction", M.A. Thesis - University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (1986), pp.9-10.

⁶³Much of this history is well recorded and analyzed in Fine & Davis (1990), pp.153-187. Women, once again, played a major role in the oppositional activity as did the much forgotten rural population.

⁶⁴An example of this approach that dots the historical literature was the Alexandra bus boycott (Alexandra is one of the oldest, and poorest black 'townships' in Johannesburg). Although there are varying accounts offered what is not in dispute was the lack of ANC grassroots involvement in the long boycott and the controversial role it played in 'settling' the boycott by calling for a compromise with the state machinery involved.

It was instances such as these that no doubt contributed to the formation of the PAC, whose leaders saw in ANC strategy a watering down of 'African nationalist' militancy.

⁶⁵See the discussion in Fine and Davis (1990), chp.8.

⁶⁶In the *ANC Constitution* adopted in January 1958.

⁶⁷It has to be acknowledged that at this stage in South Africa's history the working class itself was not (as Marx has pointed out is necessary for independent activity), particularly strong as a class in and of itself (i.e. possessing the confidence and consciousness to comprehensively act in its own interests). This is partly as a result of the economic conditions present in the 1950's, partly due to its own internal development and outlook. Neither of these conditions though, can account for the defeat of a specifically working class and socialist politics and organization.

⁶⁸The ANC's gradualist hopes were clearly revealed in the testimony of Mandela during the treason trial and captures the way in which the organization's leadership conceptualized the ultimate usefulness of mass struggle. The trial transcript read:

PROSECUTION: Do you think that your People's Democracy could be achieved by a process of gradual reforms? Suppose, as a result of pressure, the ruling class were to agree next month to a qualified franchise for the Africans, an educational test perhaps - not a stringent one - and next year, as a result of further pressure, a more important concession is made - a further concession is made in 1962, and so on over a period of ten or twenty years - do you think that the People's Democracy could be achieved in that fashion?

MANDELA: ...We demand universal adult franchise and we are prepared to exert economic pressure to attain our demands, and we will launch defiance campaigns, stay-at-homes, either singly or together, until the government should say, "gentlemen, we cannot have these state of affairs, laws being defied, and this whole situation created by stay-at-homes. Let's talk." In my view I would say Yes, let us talk and the government would say, "We think that the Europeans at present are not ready for a type of government where there might be domination by non-Europeans. We think we should give you 60 seats. The African population to elect 60 Africans to represent them in Parliament. We will leave the matter over for five years and we will review it at the end of five years." In my view, that would be a victory, my lords; we would have taken a significant step towards the attainment of universal adult suffrage for Africans, and we would then for the five years say, we will suspend civil disobedience; we won't have any stay-at-homes, and we will then devote the intervening period for the purpose of

educating the country, the Europeans, to see that these changes can be brought about and that it would bring about better racial understanding, better racial harmony in the country. I'd say we should accept it, but, of course, I would not abandon the demands for the extension of the universal franchise to all Africans...Then at the end of the five-year period we will have discussions and if the government says, "We will give you again 40 more seats", I might say that that is quite sufficient. Let's accept it, and still demand that the franchise should be extended, but for the agreed period we should suspend civil disobedience, no stay-at-homes. In that way we would eventually be able to get everything that we want; we shall have our People's Democracy, my lords.

From "The Treason Trial, 1956-60," cited in Nelson Mandela, *The Struggle is my life*, 2d ed. (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1990), pp.87-88.

CHAPTER 3
EXTERNALIZATION: NATIONAL LIBERATION OF A SPECIAL TYPE
(1960-1975)

Insofar as a victorious revolution will radically change the relation not only between the classes but also between the races . . . , thus far will the social revolution in South Africa also have a national character. The historic weapon of national liberation can be only the class struggle.¹

Leon Trotsky

At the beginning of the 1960s the ANC once again found itself lagging behind the 'masses'. Despite the marked failures of the 1958 election strategy, many people continued to sustain substantial levels of resistance. During 1959-60 women in Natal had embarked on protests against a whole range of apartheid-induced conditions, with state-run beer halls (which threatened their own home brewing industry) as their main target. Their anger had spilled over into acts of violence² which the ANC condemned while attempting to channel the grievances into compromise solutions with the authorities. Similarly, in several rural areas (Zeerust, Sekhukhuneland, and Pondoland) people battled the apartheid machinery over issues ranging from cattle culling to forced resettlement. While the ANC generally supported these struggles they did so from a distance. There was little ANC presence in the rural areas, which the organization had ignored, and without any widespread support for their struggles the rural revolts were much more easily crushed by massive state repression.³

Although the ANC had called for a nationwide anti-pass campaign in 1959 it had failed to materialize in any meaningful way, and in many areas the newly-formed Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) took the lead.⁴ The PAC had only recently been formed by several ANC Youth League members who had resigned from the ANC over what they saw as the undue influence of communists and non-blacks in the struggle for 'African' liberation. Borrowing from what they saw as the struggle for Pan-Africanism propagated by such African leaders as Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, the PAC adopted the slogan "Africa for the Africans" (i.e. for blacks) and argued for a more confrontational approach against the apartheid regime.

As their first attempt to contest the liberation landscape, the PAC under their leader Robert Sobukwe called for mass defiance against the pass-laws on the day of the campaign's launch, 21 March 1960. Large crowds responded in Evaton, Sharpeville (near Johannesburg), and Langa (Cape Town). Police opened fire on the demonstrators killing an estimated 100 people and injuring several hundred.

The response of the black population was swift. Rioting broke out in many parts of the country, and large demonstrations and marches took place in the larger urban areas. Responding to this upsurge the ANC called for a day of mourning/stay-away on 28 March, a call that was met with widespread support. However, workers and rural dwellers obviously not satisfied with this limited expression of resistance, embarked on mass strikes and indefinite stay-aways. The apartheid state responded with particularly harsh repression including the imposition of a state of emergency followed by mass arrests and the use of violence against the resisters. It was only after much of this resistance had been effectively crushed by the state, lacking as it did any national coordination or direction, that the ANC stepped in and issued a call for a nationwide stay-away on 19 April.

The call was an unmitigated failure. Much of the ANC's constituency was unprepared to embark on a spontaneous stay-away when they were still reeling from the wounds inflicted by the apartheid state's iron fist approach. Additionally, the ANC leadership had not exactly been doing much leading during the initial period after Sharpeville, and another stay-away call was not particularly novel nor was there any real indication that it would make much of a difference at the time.⁵

Sharpeville and its aftermath had brought unprecedented turmoil to South Africa. Not only did the apartheid state have to contend with internal revolt, but was also faced for the first time with widespread international condemnation for its brutal measures. International investors and multinational corporations got jittery and began to withdraw substantial amounts of capital from the country. By one account, South Africa's foreign reserves were depleted by nearly 50 percent.⁶ After a short period of indecision the apartheid state chose the path of increased repression and consolidation of their apartheid dreams. In the early-1960s they banned the ANC and PAC, declared that South Africa would break from Britain and become a Republic, and proceeded with their design for grand apartheid. Their decision to take this path was understandable under the circumstances. The black opposition organizations were weak, international moral condemnation was just that, and international capital could be counted on to assist as soon as the internal situation was once again 'stable'. Indeed, the apartheid state was not disappointed on the last count. During the latter half of 1960 American corporations increased direct investments by US\$23 million and American finance capital made loans of US\$85 million to the government.⁷

For its part, the ANC made one last attempt to try and persuade the government of the error of its ways. Convening an 'All in African Conference' on 25-26 March 1961, it

demanded that the government convene a "sovereign national convention" representative of all South Africans in order to "work out solutions which would seek to preserve and safeguard the interests of all sections of the population."⁹ The conference demanded that this convention meet by 31 May 1961, barring which mass demonstrations would take place from 29-31 May (coinciding with South Africa's declaration as a Republic). The government made no response.

Under the overall direction of Mandela the protest went ahead as planned but was called off by Mandela after the first day. Claiming that "the strike was not the national success I had hoped for", Mandela curiously concluded by saying that "this closes a chapter in our methods of political action."⁹ Exactly why Mandela made such a statement is still subject to debate. He, and other ANC leaders had simultaneously praised the protest as a success and denigrated it as indication that such protest "could no longer work." It became obvious that a new strategic direction, no longer solely non-violent, was in the offing.

Armed Struggle: Turning Away from a Mass Base

Shortly after the Republic Day failure an armed formation, Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK - 'Spear of the Nation'), was formed by individuals within the ANC Alliance. In fact, when the combination of events that preceded its formation is analyzed it becomes clearer what lay behind Mandela's statements and the subsequent turn to armed struggle:

- successful armed struggles had recently triumphed in Algeria and Cuba which provided a source of inspiration for many South Africans. The success of Fidel Castro and his small band of guerrillas along with the writings of Che Guevara heavily influenced ANC Alliance members. Guevara suggested that dedicated revolutionaries could create the objective conditions for overthrowing the state through armed

struggle and this was very appealing under the circumstances the ANC found itself.¹⁰

- ANC leaders had been deeply affected by the armed rural uprising in Pondoland. Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo, and Govan Mbeki were all from the Transkei region where the revolt took place, and had been distressed to see the incapability of the ANC to effectively respond (peasants had asked the ANC for weapons). This uprising in combination with other violent acts, led many of the leadership to see a growing gap between their pacifism and what they saw as the readiness of the 'masses' to resort to violence.
- The ANC knew that the PAC and its armed wing Poqo as well as the newly-formed National Committee of Liberation (made up of various radicals and Trotskyists) were gearing up for armed struggle. There was the fear of being outflanked.
- At its December 1960 congress the (renamed) South African Communist Party (SACP) had resolved in favor of a campaign of economic sabotage to precede guerrilla warfare.¹¹ SACP members (all active in the Alliance) no doubt influenced ANC leaders, and the eventual decision to launch MK was taken by a group of individuals rather than organizationally. As one observer has noted, ANC President Albert Luthuli only heard of the formation of MK by word of mouth.¹²
- the failure of years of non-violent accommodationism gave rise to what has been called a 'politics of despair'.¹³ A turn to armed struggle seemed the only option left, as has been confirmed by subsequent ANC historical explanations.¹⁴
- much of the ANC Alliance leadership perceived that South Africa was becoming totally isolated internationally and that this development had put the apartheid state in a severe economic and

political crisis. They also saw 'imperialism' as being on the retreat elsewhere in Africa and must thus take advantage of this 'ripening' situation.¹⁵

Officially launching itself on 16 December 1961, MK carried out sabotage actions in three of South Africa's major cities - Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban. Announcing its arrival to South Africa its manifesto declared that:

The time comes a time in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices: submit or fight. That time has now come to South Africa. We shall not submit and we have no choice but to hit back by all means within our power in defence of our people, our future and our freedom.¹⁶

Although MK claimed to be operating under the 'political guidance' of the national liberation movement, it was in fact composed of leading ANC and SACP members acting on what they, as individuals, believed to be in the best interests of the 'people's' struggle. In fact, it was not until the October 1962 Lobatse Conference, so called for the small town in neighboring Botswana in which it was held, that MK officially became the military wing of the ANC.

The initial sabotage campaign of MK was consciously limited to strikes against "things that represented the economy like pylons...and things that represented oppression like pass offices."¹⁷ The efforts of MK were extremely limited by resources and military knowledge. Recounting these early days of sabotage Ronnie Kasrils, one of the first MK recruits and later a leading MK commander, tells of how MK units made homemade bombs using condoms and gelatin capsules as timing devices.¹⁸ The sabotage campaign had little military effect on the apartheid state and its machinery, although it did create sensational media headlines and raised the expectations of much of the black population.

During the months after its inception, the MK leadership (mostly senior ANC and SACP leaders) attempted to

secure international support for the new armed struggle. It was in this regard that the SACP proved particularly important to the ANC. The SACP already had extensive contact with the USSR and other friendly Eastern bloc countries who were the only potentially reliable sources for military hardware and financial support. MK leaders including Nelson Mandela and Joe Slovo (leading SACP member) went abroad seeking assistance, visiting such places as East Germany, Algeria, Ghana, Tanzania, and Zambia. Oliver Tambo who had been sent outside the country soon after the ANC's banning to canvass support succeeded in setting up an external headquarters/mission for the ANC in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.¹⁹

This initial process of externalization was beset by severe problems, both strategic and logistic. While the majority of the leadership remained under deep (and tenuous) cover within the country, a few individuals were attempting to secure a launching pad for external guerrilla struggle thousands of miles from the borders of South Africa. The only possible sites for such a base, as in the case of Tanzania, were not only far away from South Africa but were also under severe constraints as newly-independent nations in a Cold-War world. Under these kinds of conditions, combined with the general administrative and strategic unpreparedness of the ANC and SACP to launch an armed struggle with domestic and international components, the chances of 'success' were minimal.

Before MK was able to provide itself with the potential and opportunities for any further advance, Nelson Mandela (who had since secretly returned to South Africa) was arrested inside the country in August 1962, never to taste freedom again until 1990. Given his leading role, this was a major blow to both the ANC and MK. Soon after, in early 1963, almost the entire internal leadership of the ANC (also MK) was arrested at Rivonia by the South African police and

subsequently most were sentenced to life imprisonment.²⁰ There would have to be some changes.

Throughout this time, the ANC's program of mass struggle virtually ceased to exist inside the country. Although the sparsely attended Lobatse Conference (October 1962), dominated by leading SACP members, reaffirmed 'the emphasis on mass action' the reality was that most efforts were being directed towards the nascent armed struggle and international support. The Conference had instructed the internal ANC to "carry out the national program of political education" and to implement the 'M-Plan' (the Mandela plan of house to house, street to street cell organization).²¹ However, these never passed the start-up stage and the ANC leadership resorted to their old tactic of attempting to stimulate mass struggle by their own example. The difference from the 1950's was that these examples now consisted of acts of sabotage instead of non-violent civil disobedience. The sabotage campaign, by its very character, relied on highly secretive organization and little involvement of the oppressed sectors of the population. Where those sectors could have been involved (for example within the labor movement) the ANC's desire for central control blocked potential action. At the Lobatse conference the report on trade unions had appealed for more coordination between the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) and the ANC by stressing that SACTU should be regarded as a "department of our movement rather than a separate movement."²²

Although the stated intention of the ANC and MK might have been to reinforce and spur mass struggle, the way in which armed struggle was adopted, conducted and justified made this almost impossible. There had been a unilateral decision taken to turn to armed struggle, justified by the "lack" of "peaceful and/or legal means" that made the old tactics "no longer feasible."²³ However much this was the case, this justification ignored the feasibility of 'legal and peaceful' struggle on the one hand, and mass strikes and

demonstrations (which were not legal anyway) on the other. By ruling out the possibilities and potentialities of long-term internal mass mobilization and organization and opting for armed propaganda (which logically could only end up being externally based) to stimulate the same, the ANC and SACP situated the context and content of their struggle outside the 'masses'. Ben Turok has perceptively noted that:

sabotage had the effect of isolating the organised movement from the mass who felt unable to join in this new phase or even to defend the actionists when they were seized... The sabotage campaign failed on the main count -it did not raise the level of action of the masses themselves...they were left on the threshold, frustrated bystanders of a battle being waged on their behalf....²⁴

The 1960's: The Role of the SACP and the Descent into an Exile Laager²⁵

The former CPSA had reconstituted itself in 1959 as an independent part of the ANC Alliance, changing its name to the South African Communist Party (SACP). Along with this rebirth came the argument that its main role was to lead the working class in the attainment of the 'national democratic revolution'. However, the strategic and theoretical implications of this were not clearly spelled out until 1962. In that year at a secret location in Johannesburg, a handful of activists held a clandestine SACP 'national conference'. At this 'conference' the SACP adopted a new program called *The Road to South African Freedom* which was to remain the SACP's central policy document until the late 1980's. The program was of seminal importance.

The program set out the theoretical and practical approach of the SACP towards apartheid, characterized as a "colonialism of a special type." It argued that apartheid emanated from the era of monopoly capitalism and that South Africa reflected "a combination of the worst features of

imperialism and colonialism within a single national frontier" in which black South Africa was a colony of white South Africa. As the African population was seen as having "no acute or antagonistic class divisions at present" it was only logical that the immediate task was to fight for the national liberation of the "colonised." This task would be carried out through a "national democratic revolution" with the multi-class liberation movement as the main vehicle, but with the working class (the SACP being its vanguard) constituting the leading revolutionary force within it. Since all classes did not have an objective interest in fundamental transformation of a post-apartheid South Africa, the working class' leading role would ensure that the struggle could be extended towards socialism.²⁶ Thus, the struggle had two stages: the first for a national democratic state; the second for socialism.

Even though the theory of 'colonialism of a special type' was a specifically SACP formulation, it had much influence on the ANC. After the turn to armed struggle the role and importance of the SACP was greatly increased. The SACP unlike the ANC was much more prepared for underground struggle, had access to international support, and was a small, tightly organized party capable of adapting and thriving in a difficult environment.²⁷ By the end of 1963 the situation was such that the ANC and SACP no longer functioned with any organizational effectiveness within the borders of South Africa. The subsequent externalization (internationalization), a product more of choice than necessity, placed the SACP just where it wanted to be - in the vanguard of the main national liberation movement.

The logic of the internal colonialism thesis was to locate the fight for national liberation in South Africa squarely within traditional anti-colonial struggles. Since the general strategic framework of anti-colonial struggle was one of guerrilla warfare, it followed that the main strategic and tactical emphasis of the ANC should be on

waging such a struggle. This choice of pursuing guerrilla warfare as the main strategic embodiment of the liberation struggle in South Africa flew directly in the face of the SACP's claim for the 'leading' role of the working class. It lent itself to a detachment of the liberation movement from the internal mass by organizing and conducting guerrilla warfare externally. Under the objective conditions present in South Africa this could only mean that the black working class and other internally-based oppressed sectors should look to the externally-based liberation structures and their guerrilla forces for inspiration and guidance. If this was the case, then it only stood to reason that the SACP was the embodiment of that working class, substituting itself for the real thing. The road to national liberation (and socialism) thus became the preserve of a small group of vanguardist individuals, acting in the name of the 'masses', who were to direct the struggle from afar.²⁸ Purist individual example triumphed over mass organization and struggle.

Situating the strategic direction of the struggle within this kind of framework also led to the perennial ascendance of 'national' struggle over that of class.²⁹ What the SACP formulation meant was that the old 'people's front' strategy would be transplanted from a purely non-violent terrain to that of guerrillerism. The struggles of the working class, directed as they were from outside their own ranks, would thus have to be aimed at servicing broad class coalitions in order to achieve the most 'immediate' and important task of a 'national democratic revolution' (The Party would guarantee that the struggle would not stop there though, leading the working class on to the next stage of socialist transformation). Armed struggle would act as a new pressure tactic for the larger strategy of accommodationist politics once again. From this point on, the macro-strategy of the SACP and the ANC could not be anything else than a

negotiated one.³⁰ This was the case both theoretically and practically.

Theoretically, the separation of the struggle for class and racial liberation ensured that those powerful class forces (domestic and international) whose self-interest would eventually lead them to seek a deracialized capitalism would play a leading role in finding a solution (and it certainly would not be the armed overthrow of the state).³¹ Practically, the choice of an externally based guerrilla warfare under the objective physical and geo-political conditions attending in Southern Africa (and South Africa), could not honestly contemplate the armed seizure of power from the apartheid state (what would then be the only real option?).³²

The ANC and SACP went into exile fully confident that they would soon be able to force the apartheid state into a crisis from which it would be unable to recover. Their guerrilla struggle combined with the international isolation of apartheid would, they stated with confidence, bring about national liberation where power was transferred into the hands of the 'people'. Writing in mid-1963 the SACP claimed that,

...from the viewpoint of the historical process, the South African regime is steadily and swiftly being driven into a position of isolation, in which the armaments, capital and other forms of material and moral support which sustain it from abroad will one after another be cut short...Even more important, inside South Africa itself - in spite of the massive-appearing and ever-growing state machine of domination and repression - the balance of forces is steadily changing in favour of the people and their liberation forces, and against the oppressing minority.³³

Whether or not the ANC and SACP believed their own rhetoric, the conditions for the liberation struggle in the years after Rivonia were anything but ripe. The apartheid state had succeeded in virtually wiping out the internal remnants of an organized ANC underground as well as showing

brutal efficiency in suppressing labor and local community struggles. The National Party had decided that they could weather the storm of an ANC armed struggle and whatever international pressure came their way. They proceeded to construct what was to be the cornerstone of their apartheid designs, the system of 'bantustans' or separate homelands for different African ethnic groups.³⁴ In their wake they left a liberation wasteland.

As far as the international scene was concerned South Africa became a safe investment bet once again, and a much needed ally of the West in the ongoing Cold War. Despite the turmoil gripping other parts of the imperialist terrain, South Africa represented a veritable haven and it was rewarded accordingly. Between 1961-65 corporate investment from the United States averaged over US\$33 million per year, with vitally needed capital equipment channeled to the apartheid economy.³⁵ The British followed suit, increasing their share of trade with the apartheid state. Apart from the efforts of the small progressive sections of their populations, the US and Britain treated the ANC and SACP as revolutionary minnows, preferring for the time to leave the 'armed struggle' problem to their apartheid allies. On the other side of the Cold War coin the USSR, through the SACP, began to provide some material and military support for the exiled movement although it too had more pressing 'national liberation' struggles to manipulate and support.³⁶

In the absence of an impending internal crisis, saddled with its choice of mounting a guerrilla war, and lacking a great deal of organizational cohesion the ANC chose to look to foreign governments and international organizations for sustenance. Thus, from a very early stage in its externalization, the ANC (and to a less extent the SACP) devoted substantial time and effort to diplomatic work.

Tom Lodge (1983) has identified several potential consequences of this kind of environment: taking sides in great power hostilities; the rise of "diplomatic habits" by

the leadership, encouraged by treatment from friendly governments, which could fuel "escapist illusions" about "the strength and importance of the movements they represent" and socially isolate the leadership from rank and file; the search for support from foreign sources can overshadow the existence of active membership within the country; in the absence of "creative and rewarding mobilization activity, political energy could focus itself around hairsplitting doctrinal disputes" and lend itself to internal conflict centered around factionalism and personality; the "crucial need to engage in propaganda activity to retain foreign support could contribute to intellectual sterility."³⁷ I would add to these: the tendency towards a process of ideological osmosis, whereby reliance on international support brings with it 'new' ideas and pressures; the potential for overreliance on foreign support can blind the movement to the differences between the principles of their struggle and the agenda of erstwhile supporters.³⁸

From 1963-1969 the ANC established a modest presence in Tanzania, with the bulk of the organization comprising MK recruits situated in four camps around the country. Most of the material and financial support came from the USSR and its Eastern European 'allies' although the ANC was beginning to have some success at attracting the support of the Scandinavian countries (particularly Sweden) and other western international organizations.³⁹ Although the ANC had to rely on friendly African governments (Tanzania and later Zambia and Angola) for bases, they had long given up hope of receiving much material support from African states (South Africa's 'other' liberation movement, the PAC, was not as well connected as the ANC and throughout its exile was to experience severe problems due to its reliance on pan-African support). In its campaign for the international isolation of the apartheid state the ANC had succeeded in pushing the United Nations to impose an arms embargo but its

implementation was uneven and had little effect on apartheid South Africa's military capacity.⁴⁰

Wholly unable to launch any kind of serious guerrilla struggle, the ANC quickly slipped into a moribund state. The MK recruits in the camps became disenchanted with the lack of military activity and poor conditions, the ANC leadership seemed totally out of touch with anything other than seeking international support, and there was virtually no contact with the internal situation. In attempting to combat this situation MK embarked on what has become known as the 'Wankie Campaign', which entailed armed MK units infiltrating into Rhodesia (along with Zimbabwe African People's Union guerrillas) with the hope of reaching South Africa.⁴¹ The failure of the Wankie Campaign to stem the discontent among MK and the general state of ineffectiveness of the ANC called for some major changes. As one Wankie veteran had put it: "There was no longer any direction, there was general confusion and an unwillingness to discuss the issues of revolution."⁴²

Morogoro and Beyond: The SACP Ascendant

On 25 April 1969 in Morogoro, Tanzania the ANC held its 'Third Consultative Congress'. It was attended by no more than eighty delegates, eleven of whom were non-African. Most of the delegates were members of MK. The Conference lasted for seven days. In light of the criticisms that had been leveled at the leadership the entire executive resigned before the conference, to be reconstituted in light of conference decisions. Much early debate centered around the need for organizational and leadership reforms and as a result the decision was made to establish an internal commission to hear grievances, as well as an oath and code of behavior. It was further decided that MK and all military affairs would now come under the responsibility of a Revolutionary Council, only subordinate to the national executive.

On the policy front, the conference took the decision to open up ANC membership to all races although they could not belong to national executive. There was much debate around this issue, with several leading ANC members expressing heated opposition.⁴³ As a result of the decision, Joe Slovo, Yusuf Dadoo, and Reg September (all SACP members and all 'non-black') were voted onto the new Revolutionary Council. The SACP had long pushed for a more cohesive relationship between the ANC and other alliance organizations, and the membership decision (vigorously backed by SACP members and leaders at the conference) was a signal victory for the Party.⁴⁴ What was of equal or more importance though, was the adoption by the conference of a new 'Revolutionary Programme', commonly known as the 'Strategy and Tactics' document (see Appendix B).

Since the 1955 Freedom Charter the ANC had not possessed a written policy and strategy document that took into account the completely new situation. The 'Strategy and Tactics' document had the mark of the SACP written all over it.⁴⁵ It began by stating that the South African liberation struggle was taking place "within an international context of the transition to the Socialist system...we in South Africa are part of the zone in which national liberation is the chief content of the struggle." Placing the question of seizing power firmly at the strategic forefront it argued that "...it is surely a question of whether, in the given concrete situation, the course or policy advocated will aid or impede the prospects of the conquest of power." It went into some detail on the history of armed struggle and the 'special' circumstances of South Africa which made guerrilla warfare both appropriate and necessary both in the rural and urban areas. Assessing the 'strength and weakness' of the enemy, the document followed the classic guerrilla warfare scenario of weaker forces conducting a war of attrition on superior enemy forces painting a picture of a Cuban-style struggle.⁴⁶ Although it argued that the working class

constitutes a "distinct and reinforcing layer of our liberation and Socialism"¹⁷ the document made it clear where the thrust of the struggle was located - "the national character of the struggle must dominate our approach." If there was any doubt of the strategic aims of the ANC it was answered in no uncertain terms:

...it is only the success of the national democratic revolution which - by destroying the existing social and economic relationships - will bring with it a correction of the historical injustices perpetrated against the indigenous majority and thus lay the basis for a new - and deeper internationalist - approach. Until then, the national sense of grievance is the most potent revolutionary force which must be harnessed. To blunt it in the interests of abstract concepts of internationalism is, in the long run, doing neither a service to revolution nor to internationalism.¹⁸

What the 'Strategy and Tactics' document represented, above all, was the ascendance of the SACP's theoretical and practical vision of struggle within the ANC. Some seasoned observers have disputed this, pointing to the 'welfare state capitalism' approach of the document, and the 'conservative (and realistic) ideological' position of the ANC before and after Morogoro.¹⁹ What this perspective ignores is that the ANC's 'Strategy and Tactics' document represented a popular version of the SACP's earlier program, set out in its 1962 *The Road to South African Freedom*. The nationalist and welfare state capitalist outlook of the 'Strategy and Tactics' document is the logical manifestation of the SACP's own formulations. Indeed, one of the myths perpetrated by the revolutionary image of the SACP is the disassociation of moderate nationalist and welfare capitalist strategies from the SACP itself. The SACP's strategic vision of a struggle for a 'national democratic revolution' as the first stage in the ultimate struggle for socialism embodied these very characteristics.²⁰

As a result of the organizational changes at Morogoro the ANC's top bodies took on a distinctly two-tiered appearance and approach to functions. The top leadership of the new ANC National Executive Committee (NEC) resembled a who's who of early Youth Leaguers. Oliver Tambo was formally elected as President-General, Alfred Nzo as Secretary-General, and Thomas Nkobi as Treasurer-General. Although none of them were SACP members they were generally considered to be 'low-key' organizational men. The new MK commander Joe Modise was not particularly popular with the rank-and-file of MK.⁵¹ President-General Tambo in particular was a man for whom organizational unity was prized above everything else, preferring to stay out of ideological and strategic battlegrounds. This trait was to serve the externalized ANC well but also allowed other, more strident leaders, a wide berth of activity. Although the National Executive Council (NEC) was the highest decision-making body in the ANC its main day-to-day tasks remained organizational and diplomatic. The new "Revolutionary Council", with a majority SACP membership, took control of what had been identified as the ANC's main task, prosecution of the armed struggle. Mention also needs to be made of the imprisoned leadership on Robben Island. Even though Mandela, Sisulu and others were separated from the daily running of the ANC and MK they were to wield influence through the many jailed activists who went in and out of Robben Island, and when possible through written contact with the external leadership.⁵²

Despite the organizational changes and 'new' strategic direction adopted, the ANC did not experience a cessation of internal problems nor a marked revival of its guerrilla campaign. There continued to be internal bickering over the inclusion of non-Africans and the influence of the SACP within the ANC, finally resulting in a public feud and the eventual expulsion of eight prominent ANC members for 'destabilizing activities'.⁵³ The ANC also had problems with

the Tanzanian government stemming from an attempted coup plot gone wrong (the ANC had knowledge of the plot). On the 'armed struggle' front, there were several attempts to infiltrate MK cadres through the Botswana border, the explosion of leaflet 'bombs' in some major South African cities, and at least one ill-fated plan to land guerrillas on the South African coast.⁵⁴ It was a far cry from the revolutionary guerrilla onslaught called for at Morogoro.

On the positive side the ANC could point to at least two successes: it had managed to hold itself together which was, under the circumstances that had prevailed, no small achievement; and it was gradually succeeding in winning increased international support for itself and a growing anti-apartheid campaign. However, by the mid-1970's the ANC was reaping the bitter consequences of its chosen strategy and tactics: the externally based guerrilla war was yet to get off the ground; relationships between the leadership and rank-and-file were under strain; there was a near complete lack of an internal structure; and the apartheid state was not threatened, while domestic and international capital were enjoying the benefits of a relatively 'stable' apartheid South Africa. The ANC's externalized liberation struggle was just that - external.

NOTES

¹Leon Trotsky, 'Writings 1934-35' (New York, 1974), p.254 as cited in Alex Callinicos "Marxism and Revolution in South Africa," *International Socialism* 31 (Spring 1986), p.23.

²Later, in March 1961 18 people were found guilty of killing nine policemen during the disturbances. See Drum, March 1961 as cited in Fine & Davis (1990), p.217.

³The case of the Pondoland uprising is important for several reasons: it revealed the militancy of the rural areas and people's willingness to resort to violence against the apartheid system; it clearly unmasked the ANC's complete lack of organization in the rural areas, a weakness that was to remain with the ANC throughout; it showed that unless and until there was a strategy that combined rural & urban, local & national struggles the apartheid state would not face a serious crisis of survival.

For the best discussion of the rural revolts see Govan Mbeki *The Peasant's Uprising* (London: International Defence & Aid Fund, 1984).

⁴There have been conflicting accounts over whether the PAC 'usurped' the ANC's existing anti-pass campaign, with ANC historians/sympathizers claiming that the PAC's call pre-empted what would have been a carefully planned and successful nationwide ANC campaign. While there is every reason to believe that the PAC's campaign relied more on spontaneous action, the fact is that the ANC was once again lagging behind the mood of the people.

⁵See Robert Fine and Dennis Davis, *Beyond Apartheid: Labour and Liberation in South Africa* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1990), pp.222-223. It is true that much of the ANC was involved in the Treason Trial but this could not excuse the willful lack of strategic direction and organization that the ANC failed to provide. This failure was more an indication of the ANC's historical accommodationist approach to struggle. When the uprisings began the ANC was incapable of leading and directing them. The organization recoiled from the attendant militancy and implications for their chosen strategy - limited, non-violent, and carefully planned acts of pressure that relied more on the favorable response of the 'enemy' than on the people they purported to represent.

⁶The major impact seemed to be concentrated on the South African stock market. See Ruth Milkman "Apartheid, Economic Growth, and U.S. Foreign Policy in South Africa," in *South African Capitalism and Black Political Opposition*, Martin Murray ed. (Cambridge: Schenkman Publishing Company, 1982), p.437.

⁷Ibid, p.437.

⁸In Frances Meli, *South Africa Belongs to Us: A History of the ANC* (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1988), p.141. The PAC withdrew from the Conference before it met, claiming that the ANC was trying to dominate the liberation struggle and place it under the influence of foreign ideologies.

⁹Thomas Karis and Gwendolen Carter, *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of Politics in South Africa 1882-1964*, vol.3, p.364.

¹⁰Regis Debray who had fought with Che Guevara in Bolivia later published a book, *Revolution in the Revolution* that called this the 'foco' theory of struggle. The main feature of such a theory was that guerrillas could act as the spearhead for revolution without first waiting for the objective conditions of revolution to occur. While there is much to be said for the heroic struggles of Guevara and the Cubans, the 'foco' theory relies far too heavily on subjectivism and elements of adventurism. Baruch Hirson, involved in planning for armed action at the time admits that 'everyone acted like a bunch of adventurers' (Baruch Hirson, interview with author, October 1992). Cuba's revolutionary success was a unique event, not repeated since.

For a good overview of the literature on guerrilla warfare and revolution see William Pomeroy, *Guerrilla Warfare and Marxism* (New York: International Publishers, 1968).

¹¹In Fine & Davis (1990), p.231.

¹²Stephen Ellis & Tsepo Sechaba, *Comrades Against Apartheid: The ANC and South African Communist Party in Exile* (London: James Currey, 1992), p.32.

¹³Baruch Hirson, interview with author, October 1992. Hirson argued that one of the main effects was to "leave people behind without any continuity in struggle."

¹⁴See ANC, *Submit or Fight: 30 Years of Umkhonto we Sizwe* (Johannesburg: ANC Political Education Section, 1991); Ronnie Kasrils, *Armed and Dangerous: My Undercover Struggle Against Apartheid* (Oxford: Heinemann Educational, 1993); and Nelson Mandela, *The Struggle is My Life* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1990).

¹⁵See Joe Slovo, "South Africa - No Middle Road", in Basil Davidson, Joe Slovo, and Anthony Wilkinson. *Southern Africa: The New Politics of Revolution* (Hamondsworth: Penguin, 1976), p.181. I would argue that this perspective, that sees South Africa becoming increasingly isolated by the international community, was based on an extremely short-sighted view of both imperialism and international capital, as well as the international geo-politics. Although there had been withdrawal of capital after Sharpeville and moral condemnation of apartheid, the main western powers, in particular the UK and the USA, had been biding their time. The international moral pressure combined

with the generally insecure investment environment immediately after Sharpeville, had temporarily forced a freeze on capital flows (See Milkman, 1982).

Once it became clear that the apartheid state had effectively crushed the post-Sharpeville resistance and created, once again, a 'stable' investment-friendly environment, their support resumed with increased vigor. For example, U.S. trade with South Africa (exports) rose by 33% between 1963-1965 and the Johnson administration actively encouraged investment and trade. See Dale McKinley, *United States Foreign Policy Towards South Africa (1969-1985): Continuity and Contradiction*, M.A. Thesis - University of North Carolina- Chapel Hill (1986), pp.10-11. It would seem as though Slovo and others completely misinterpreted the intentions of international capital and the resolve of western governments to carry through with their Cold War geopolitics.

¹⁶In ANC, *Submit or Fight: 30 years of Umkhonto we Sizwe* (Johannesburg, ANC Political Education Section, 1991), p.5.

¹⁷Joe Slovo, "It was just the beginning," in *Ibid.*, p.10.

¹⁸Ronnie Kasrils, *Armed and Dangerous: My Undercover Struggle Against Apartheid* (Oxford: Heinemann Educational, 1993), pp.39-40. Kasrils account of the early days of MK is by far the most open and illuminating showing, at the very least, a willingness to be self-critical.

¹⁹It is interesting to note that most of the main figures in MK as well as in the external mission of the ANC were members of the SACP. On the MK side these included Joe Slovo, Govan Mbeki, Ahmed Kathrada, Dennis Goldberg, and Jack Hodgson. Of the external mission complement, Tennyson Makiwane, Mzwai Piliso, and Moses Mabhida were Party members. This is not surprising, given that the SACP has already been operating underground for a number of years and had been instrumental in the turn to armed struggle and externalization.

Nelson Mandela, later made the observation that it was a "costly mistake" to have so many experienced activists and leaders in MK because it made the work of the apartheid police that much easier. ("Umkhonto's First Commander," in *Submit or fight* (1991), p.6). However, given the way in which MK was formed it does not seem that it could have been otherwise.

²⁰One thing that emerged from this debacle was the way in which MK had ignored security, seriously underestimating the resolve and expertise of the apartheid security forces. Numerous papers were found by the police in the Rivonia farmhouse including the 'Mayibuye Plan' document. This plan, among other things, revealed that MK was planning for a sustained guerrilla war financed and operating from outside the country which would hopefully spark an internal uprising and crisis leading to eventual victory. One of the methods contemplated was the use of planes to drop massive amounts of leaflets over the country calling on the people to rise up in struggle. Cuba was stated to be an appealing model.

Although the document has subsequently been criticized as hopelessly adventurist and utopian, the basic outlines were to be followed once the ANC had set up in exile. Many ANC leaders and activists, including Slovo, have since argued that the objective conditions present in 1962-3 were not properly appreciated. None has ever seemed to question the strategic correctness of it though.

²¹Final resolutions of the Lobatse (Botswana) Conference as cited in Meli (1988), p.153.

²²In Ibid., (1988), p.153.

²³This was the essence of the ANC's later justifications for the decision to turn to armed struggle contained in their 1969 'Strategy and Tactics' document adopted at the Morogoro Conference in Tanzania.

²⁴Ben Turok, "South Africa: The Search for a Strategy," in the *Socialist Register* (1973), p.360.

²⁵The word *laager* comes from the Afrikaans language and was used to describe the ox-wagon formation that the early Afrikaner pioneers made when faced with attack from hostile enemies.

²⁶The program is found in SACP, *South African Communists Speak* (London: Inkululeko Publications, 1981), pp.284-320. There are many good commentaries and critiques on this formulation. Some of the better ones are: Harold Wolpe, "The Theory of Internal Colonialism: the South African Case," in Ivor Oxaal, Tony Bennet, and David Booth eds., *Beyond the Sociology of Development: Economy and Society in Latin America and Africa* (London: Routledge, 1975); Colin Bundy, "Around Which Corner?: Revolutionary theory and contemporary South Africa," *Transformation*, No.8 (1989); and Adam Habib, "The Theory of the South African Revolution: 'Colonialism of a Special Type' and the National Democratic Revolution," (unpublished paper, n.d).

The argument by the SACP for a 'national democratic revolution' can be directly linked to the call by the Comintern in 1928 for an 'independent native republic'. The singularity of the SACP formulation was to place this within a specifically South African framework. As in this though, the SACP has always (until the collapse of the USSR) reflected the line coming from Moscow - it has been one of the tragedies of the South African liberation struggle.

²⁷What set the SACP apart was the practice of 'democratic centralism'. What this really meant was that positions taken by the central committee (if prior debate was possible it might take place) were final and to be propagated without question by the entire membership. One former SACP member Ben Turok, who ran into trouble with this practice, has described its practical result as an 'engineering of the struggle' (Ben Turok, interview with author, October 1992). However, it did allow the SACP to be an extremely cohesive and disciplined organization. Under the conditions that were to prevail in exile these characteristics proved immensely important in the SACP's relationship with the ANC.

²⁸Although I offer this critique as a negative development, there are those within the SACP itself who see this vanguardist and detached role as a positive thing. Stephen Louw, a lecturer in politics at Witswatersrand University in Johannesburg and formerly active within the SACP, has argued that the SACP's independence 'from the grassroots' allowed it to develop policies and thoughts not tied to the (negative) pressures of an 'ultra-nationalist base' (Stephen Louw, interview with author, November 1991).

²⁹To this criticism Joe Slovo has replied:

No doubt the necessary emphasis on the national content of the struggle could, as a by-product, encourage a disregard of its ultimately class basis and with it the emergence of pure bourgeois nationalism, backward racialism and chauvinism...Insofar as this danger exists it must, of course, be continuously countered by the spread of true revolutionary ideology, and by ensuring that a working class imbued with class and political consciousness plays its proper role in the coalition of forces which constitutes the liberation front (my emphasis) [Slovo, (1976), p.139].

³⁰Most observers of ANC and SACP strategy locate the overt 'turn' to a negotiation path in late 1989, when the ANC issued its Constitutional guidelines. Some observers recognized this a bit earlier. So, for example, long-time ANC watcher Tom Lodge commented in late 1987: "Like most anti-colonial struggles, this one is almost certain to end through talks" [Lodge, "State Power and the politics of resistance," *Work In Progress*, No.'s 50/51, (October/November, 1987), p.5].

While the Constitutional Guidelines were certainly the first clear public confirmation of a negotiations strategy what I am arguing is that the logic of the entire strategic and theoretical approach since 1961-3 points in the direction of a negotiated outcome. It might not have been a conscious realization amongst some of the leadership and intellectuals but it surely could not have completely escaped those who formulated the strategic and tactical approach at the time.

³¹Of course, these class forces could potentially include the state itself. If the apartheid state reached a point where its leading elements realized that their continued political survival called for drastic accommodation on their part, they too would be part of the 'solution'.

³²This is tacitly admitted to by Ronnie Kasrils, who in a 1990 interview stated that: "There are revolutionary movements which, at their foundation, addressed the question of seizing state power. These immediately recognized and analyzed the use of state power and the need to develop a force to seize state power. With us that was not the ethos" [In "Kasrils on Umkhonto," *Work in Progress*, No.68 (August, 1990), p.8].

One way of interpreting this is to seriously question whether there was ever any real hope of seizing power amongst those who led the armed struggle itself whilst simultaneously telling the 'masses' otherwise.

³³"Statement of the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party," *The African Communist*, (April-June, 1963), pp.3-18.

³⁴For good discussions of the apartheid policies of bantustanization/balkanization and their more immediate effects see Barbara Rogers, *Divide and Rule* (London: International Defense and Aid Fund, 1980); and Roger Southall, *South Africa's Transkei: the political economy of an "independent" Bantustan* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983).

³⁵Milkman (1982), p.437.

³⁶Even at this early stage though, the USSR was definitely looking at the long-term benefits of having another national liberation struggle with which to play out their Cold War rivalries with the United States. There might have been a degree of 'socialist' and 'liberatory' camaraderie with the ANC and SACP (something that was felt closely by the South Africans). However, the record of the USSR's support for national liberation struggles around the world suggests that its main aim in supporting the South African movement was not particularly concerned with the content of that liberation, but rather with the addition of another ally. Examples would be the character of Soviet support for struggles in places like Mozambique, Somalia, Ethiopia and Vietnam. I would argue that many of the military-industrial and domestic power needs of the USSR rather than any significant principled solidarity with oppressed people's. Contrast this to the role and character of Cuban support for the Angolan people.

³⁷Tom Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa since 1945* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983), pp.295-296.

³⁸Discussion in the rest of this dissertation will gauge to what degree these potential consequences were to be part of the ANC and SACP's externalized struggle.

³⁹Most of the SACP leadership and structures were located in London at this time. The contacts that the Party had with the British Communist Party and other organizations led to the development of the largest and most influential international non-governmental anti-apartheid organization, the British Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM).

⁴⁰The United States, for its part, began to formulate a conscious policy of encouraging new investment and trade and expanding its political relationship with the apartheid state. In addition, the United States began to provide South Africa with military hardware "for defense against external threats." In return the United States received strategic access to South Africa's land and sea in the form of satellite stations and access to port facilities for military purposes (See Danaher, (1985), p.79).

The U.S. government had adopted, in 1969, National Security Memorandum (NSM) 39, a document that set out a clear policy of support for white South Africa and which was authored by Secretary of State

Henry Kissinger. NSM 39 signaled a more pro-active approach to supporting 'anti-Communist' white South Africa which, it was hoped, would undermine any existing or nascent revolutionary activity/organization. See McKinley (1986), pp.12-15. For the full transcript of NSM 39 see Kenneth Mokoena ed., *South Africa and the United States: The Declassified Record* (New York: The Free Press, 1993), pp.201-218.

⁴¹There are many accounts of this campaign and the reasons behind it. Of the three units that were involved in the campaign few survived (among them Chris Hani, later to become MK Chief of Operations) and although it has been seen by the ANC and its supporters as psychologically important, there is general agreement that it was an ill-conceived and desperate measure. Ellis & Sechaba (1992) along with Lodge (1983) (citing Johns, 1973) have claimed that it was a way to deal with the dissidents in the MK camps by sending them on a suicidal mission. Compare these accounts with the 'official' ANC history of the campaign: "After lengthy debates and consultations an order was issued...that our men and women were to cross the Zambezi towards home...these ANC men and women were filled with hatred for the enemy and were prepared to fight him wherever he was...." (Meli, 1988, p.162).

⁴²Unsigned 'reply to the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party', unpublished statement issued in London by expelled ANC dissidents in February 1976, p.35 as cited in Lodge (1983), p.300.

⁴³Two of the most outspoken critics were Robert Resha and Tennyson Makiwane. Makiwane was later to lead a breakaway from the ANC (on the occasion of Resha's funeral in 1975) which failed miserably.

⁴⁴One account of the debate surrounding the membership issue, claims that the SACP had engaged in prior caucusing and formed a 'bloc' in the conference (the SACP had a strong presence in MK) that saw through the changes. This would be consistent with the SACP's democratic centralist mode of operation. See Ellis & Sechaba (1992), pp.58-62.

⁴⁵Ellis & Sechaba(1990), p.58 suggest that it was most probably written by SACP members Slovo and Joe Matthews

⁴⁶In a related Morogoro document "Development of the South African Revolution," the primacy of armed struggle was linked to the rejection of reforms. It stated that,

...there is not one single factor to justify any expectation that reform could even lead to any amelioration of our conditions. The only correct path for the oppressed national groups and their democratic supporters...is armed revolutionary struggle. This is not altered by the problems and difficulties that confront us in developing the revolution.

In Aquino de Braganca and Immanuel Wallerstein, *The African Liberation Reader, Vol.3: the Strategy of Liberation* (London: Zed Press, 1982), p.73.

⁴⁷This is the only place in the document where the word 'Socialism' is identified as a goal of struggle (i.e. as a second stage of liberation led by the working class). There can be no stronger confirmation of the SACP's two-stage approach than this, and no mistaking the affiliation of the authors of the document.

⁴⁸All quotations from ANC, "Strategy and Tactics of the African National Congress," in Ben Turok ed., *Revolutionary Thought in the Twentieth Century* (London: Zed Press, 1980), pp.145-157.

⁴⁹See Lodge (1983), p.301. Lodge makes his argument against those who charge that the ANC 'was (and is) subordinated to the control of the SACP'. I am not arguing for what I see as the conspiracy theory of SACP control of the ANC, but the assumption that underlies Lodge's position is that the SACP represented a competing radical and revolutionary socialist ideology. Lodge's approach also leads him in the direction of ignoring the important effects that patronage from the USSR had on the SACP and ANC. Describing the ANC's strategy as 'pragmatic and flexible' Lodge argues that Soviet support 'does not appear to have had a marked influence' (p.305). In fact, the entire theoretical framework for the SACP strategic vision, and ultimately that of the ANC at Morogoro, derives sustenance from Comintern formulations on the national liberation question.

⁵⁰Long-time South African revolutionary activist Neville Alexander (former Leader of the NEUM, ten-year prisoner on Robben Island, and currently chairperson of the Workers Organisation for Socialist Action) has made the comment that the SACP only served to "strengthen the petite bourgeoisie direction and character of the ANC," because of its analytical and organizational skills. In his words the SACP gave the ANC a "revolutionary image and legitimacy" (Neville Alexander, interview with author, June 1992).

⁵¹Ellis and Sechaba (1992), p.61.

⁵²This collection of activists so influenced, along with the Mandela generation were to become known as the 'Islanders', so called because of their 'schooling' on Robben Island. Many of these 'Islanders' were to play major roles in the ANC after their release, and particularly after its unbanning in 1990.

⁵³Although many of the criticisms leveled had the air of personal grievances, the accusations of undemocratic decision-making and a general Stalinist atmosphere were more serious. That they were contemptuously dismissed was unfortunate, for the same accusations were to surface later with more serious consequences. See Ellis and Sechaba (1992).

⁵⁴Kasrils (1993), p.112. Kasrils tells of how the ANC bought an old boat to take the party of guerrillas but when its engines seized up off the Kenya coast the plan had to be abandoned. The message to the internal contact was: "Regret to inform you mother has died." (p.113)

CHAPTER 4
FROM SOWETO TO KABWE (1976-1984)

Masses do not of their own accord generate an ideology which provides true guidelines on the main direction of the struggle, or which makes them conscious of the necessity to create non-exploitative relations of production.¹

Joe Slovo (1976)

Slovo's statement encapsulates the dynamic of the ANC's and SACP's approach to struggle during the 1970's and early 1980's. Throughout the labor, student, and community (e.g. youth, women's, and civic associations) struggles inside South Africa and the subsequent regional and international developments, the ANC/SACP continued to direct the liberation struggle from their external base. It was not so much that they did not respond to internal mass struggle, but rather that they did so in a way which reflected no basic change in strategy and tactics. As such, the liberation struggle had to be the preserve of the 'revolutionary' ANC/SACP, willing to accommodate other elements but with overall control and direction. History kept repeating itself.

By the early 1970's South Africa was beginning to experience the problematic effects of apartheid capitalism. The historic division of labor between well-paid, skilled white workers and low-wage unskilled black workers, had gradually been undermined by the demands of an expanding South African capitalism. Black workers were no longer solely confined to predominantly migrant unskilled labor, not because of any change of heart by white capital, but

because of the new demands of the system.² Large scale foreign investment during the 1960's, the subsequent take-off in the manufacturing sector, and the need of the apartheid state to create ever-expanding economic opportunities for its white supporters all contributed to a growing crisis. This was not just a crisis engendered by apartheid with predominantly political overtones, but also a structural economic crisis of capital accumulation. South African capital and the apartheid state found themselves in a crisis of overaccumulated capital that could not be solved by short-term political and/or economic reform.³ Unfortunately the ANC/SACP did not grasp this, preferring to focus almost exclusively on the racial (national) foundation of the crisis.⁴

Had the ANC/SACP attempted to translate, into practical strategies, the critiques of capitalism present in their own documents and (written) in the history of the South African struggle, they would have been better able to grasp the possibilities of grassroots struggle. Indeed, the bases of the struggles during the 1970's and 1980's, dominated as they were by the workers and unemployed, were explicit responses to both the ravages of apartheid and the crises engendered by the process of capitalist accumulation. Practical strategies that confined themselves to seeking the shortest possible route to 'national liberation' (as negotiations were later described by ANC/SACP leaders), under the objective conditions that pertained, could only see grassroots struggle as a tactical weapon; they could not, I would argue, provide a solid foundation for creating the possibilities for a 'full transfer of power to the people'. Such an assessment of the dialectic between struggle and structure (despite rhetoric to the contrary), led the ANC/SACP to approach the internal struggles of the 1970's and 1980's not on the terms of those struggles, but rather on the terms of the ANC/SACP's narrow strategic view of national liberation.

The rationale for the ANC/SACP approach included a verbal (intellectual) recognition of the capitalist basis of apartheid. No one was more lucid in explaining this rationale than leading ANC/SACP member Joe Slovo.⁵ In order to do so, Slovo had to give intellectual and strategic primacy to the argument that the liberation struggle could only realistically concentrate its energies on an anti-apartheid plane; thus, artificially separating the struggle into its racial and class components. This approach was in the best tradition of the two-stage theory and its logical consequence has been to ignore the strategic need to develop a specifically anti-capitalist struggle.

Although the architects of apartheid-capitalism and the externalized ANC/SACP wavered in their response to the gathering crisis, workers once again showed the way. In early 1973 tens of thousands of workers in the coastal city of Durban went on a spontaneous strike.⁶ Refusing to elect a leadership, enter into negotiations with their employers, or affiliate themselves with any specific political or union current the workers succeeded in getting most of their wage demands met. Their example set off other nationwide struggles which met with mixed responses of repression and attempts at cooptation. More importantly, the workers infused a new sense of struggle amongst the black population and a small but influential sector of whites, which was to lead to the formation of a new trade unionism outside of the ANC/SACP political umbrella.⁷

On another internal front there had been growing unrest amongst black students in the early 1970's over educational conditions and the general lack of any internal struggle. Bolstered by the absence of any organized liberation movement structures, the students had formed their own representative bodies in the form of the South African Students Organization (SASO), expanded later in 1972 into the Black People's Convention (BPC) and the Black Community Programmes (BCP).⁸ These new organizations were heavily

influenced by a rejuvenated intellectual version of the earlier Africanist tradition. Aptly named 'black consciousness' this new approach posited that the struggle against apartheid was first a battle of values and identity. SASO's manifesto declared that it worked for

...the liberation of the Black man first from psychological oppression by themselves through induced inferiority complex and secondly from physical oppression accruing out of living in white racist society...⁹

Concentrating their efforts around self-empowerment and upliftment, the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) bodies did not fundamentally threaten the immediate interests of the apartheid state. The emphasis of practical BCM politics was a focus on individual and collective expressions of black pride which was realized through various social/community projects. While this approach had a longer-term potential to create and/or strengthen national struggles for political and economic liberation (physical oppression), there was little organizational cohesion or coherent political strategy to allow for the consolidation of (possible) psychological liberation by contesting the more immediate physical manifestations (institutions) of apartheid rule.

One analyst has placed the BCM philosophy within the tradition of Gramsci's concept of the 'crisis of ideological hegemony', arguing that the rise of black consciousness signaled "that white hegemony had lost its consensus... white civilization and standards were no longer accepted as a model to be emulated."¹⁰ I would strongly argue that while it certainly rejected white racialism and superiority, black consciousness as an ideological construct failed to go beyond the identification of racial categories. To represent the beginning of a 'crisis of ideological hegemony' it needed to encompass the totality of what constituted a crisis in South Africa - apartheid capitalism. BCM leader Steve Biko was moving in this direction before his death.

Even with their strategic limitations and lack of a mass base BCM influenced an entire generation, particularly young black intellectuals and students from urban areas. It was this group which was to provide the ANC/SACP with the means to resurrect the armed struggle and give a much-needed injection of youthful militancy.

Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) structures, along with new labor formations, represented the main focus of internal struggle during the early and mid-1970's. For its part, the ANC/SACP literally stood on the sidelines, preoccupied with its own external problems and plans. There was some activity by ANC members fresh from Robben Island and the beginnings of building underground structures by an MK detachment based in Lesotho (led by Chris Hani).¹¹ As could be expected, the apartheid state tried to maintain strict control by forcibly removing millions from the burgeoning urban black population to the bantustan wastelands, and arresting an equal number showing any sign of dissent.¹²

Alongside this repression there were attempts at a more reformist approach. Realizing that the creation of social/material and racial divisions amongst the non-white population could only benefit the consolidation of apartheid, the state began to provide limited political and economic opportunities to the small black middle class as well as the colored and Indian 'national groups'. This most often took the form of government subsidies for small and medium sized business, increased access to credit facilities, and the creation of local political and administrative bureaucracies ('self-run' community/ township councils).¹³

This state sponsored reformism, however, marked the beginning of a much more important process. By the mid-1970's there was already the realization amongst the ruling class in South Africa that to save capitalism they would have to jettison the fundamentals of apartheid. This

suggests that, domestic capital understood the necessity for change more than the state. In 1976 Anton Rupert, chairman of the mega-conglomerate Anglo-American, declared that "we [capitalists] cannot survive unless we have a free market economy, a stable black middle class."¹⁴ Although this realization, at that time, did not encompass the 'revolutionary/communist' ANC/SACP, the externalized liberation movement was to become central to this reform process. In the mean-time, domestic business answered the crisis of apartheid capitalism by embarking on a program of devaluing capital, a process that involved increased inflation, employee retrenchment (increasing the suffering of the already burdened majority), and increased monopolization.¹⁵

In short, South Africa had all the ingredients of a social tinderbox. A spark was all that was needed to set it off.

The '76 Uprising and Beyond:
Answered Prayers and Lost Opportunities

Besides the internal developments leading up to the events of 1976, there had been much activity on the international front that affected both oppressed and oppressor in South Africa. For decades the apartheid state had enjoyed the security given by friendly colonial and racist white neighbors, so the events of 1974-75 came as a shock blow. After the 1974 fall of the fascist Caetano regime in Portugal, the new government rapidly set about 'granting' independence to its colonies of Angola and Mozambique. In Mozambique the only serious liberation movement, FRELIMO (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique), took power, while in Angola three competing movements (MPLA, FNLA, UNITA) jockeyed for power. Since both FRELIMO and the MPLA (who looked like they would take power in Angola), were pro-Soviet, the apartheid state saw red. In collusion with the United States it proceeded to back the 'pro-western'

FNLA and UNITA in a desperate attempt to prevent the MPLA from consolidating its apparent victory.¹⁶ The subsequent South African military invasion, ending in quick retreat in the face of a combined MPLA and Cuban counter-offensive, was a severe setback for apartheid confidence and a great inspiration for black South Africans.

Despite these developments on the regional landscape, the apartheid authorities felt confident enough to expand their internal efforts at control. When the state decreed that the Afrikaans language was to be the medium of instruction (initially for mathematics and social studies) in black high schools, a group of students in Soweto responded with active resistance and small demonstrations.¹⁷ The June 16th events that followed took almost all the major organizations and the apartheid state by surprise. Emboldened by the radical rhetoric of black consciousness and the general climate of resistance that had developed since the 1973 strikes, all fed by a deteriorating socio-economic situation, large numbers of students and urban dwellers went on the offensive. Six days after the first student demonstration a total of one hundred and thirty-six people were officially listed as having been killed.¹⁸

The apartheid state quickly doused the insurrectionary flames, aided by the lack of well organized grassroots structures to direct the anger and action. The BCM had neither the theoretical nor practical capacity to combat the state and the ANC/SACP had played a self-imposed limited role. Although there were the beginnings of an independent working class movement that could potentially fill this role, it was still too weak and wracked by division over the 'national democratic' question and the relationship to the externalized ANC/SACP to take up the challenge.

An example of this division was revealed in the late 1970's fights that erupted within SACTU, not unlike the wrangles that raged in the 1930's and 1940's between Trotskyites and members of the then CPSA over the direction

and organization of the working class. In the case of SACTU the main battle line was drawn between two opposing perspectives. On the one side, there were those directly allied to the ANC/SACP who argued that the 'national liberation' program of the ANC/SACP demanded that working class organizations should concentrate their energies on securing cadres for the externalized movement and support the program of multi-class politics. On the other side, were those who argued that an (overt) alliance with the ANC/SACP would only lead to the subservience of an independent working class politics to the broad multi-class demands of the ANC/SACP's national liberation strategies, and its emphasis on guerrilla-induced mobilization.¹⁹ It was to the ANC/SACP's discredit that they squelched debate and continued to be wholly convinced that independent worker struggles should be left to their stagist post-'national democratic revolution' phase of liberation. By doing so, the ANC/SACP was helping to create the conditions for a truncated liberation.

What the 1976 uprising showed, once again, was the lack of internal (underground) revolutionary organization to absorb and subsequently carry forward the militant struggle carried out by the 'masses'. As this study has shown, the leadership of the ANC/SACP continued to consciously practice an externalized strategic approach that was informed by a particularly narrow interpretation of the possibilities under the prevailing objective conditions; in effect, they did not believe in the capabilities and potential of grassroots struggle. Such an approach was not conducive to sustainable internal organization. Instead, the ANC/SACP, was waiting in the wings with its guèrrillarist 'national democratic revolution' vision.²⁰ It was to the ANC/SACP that many of the 1976 generation were to turn, not out of ideological or organizational affinity, but out of desperate necessity.²¹

Encouraged by the internal upsurge in mass struggle and cognizant of the organizational gap that existed, the ANC/SACP began to recruit actively and to propagandize. ANC literature which had not been seen inside South Africa for a long time was disseminated widely, accompanied by the organization's symbols (for example logos). At the same time the ANC/SACP began actively to encourage students and other activists to leave the country and join its armed wing MK, an exercise made easier by the large numbers who were trying to escape detention. As people poured across the South African borders, it was the ANC/SACP that provided the only organization capable of absorbing the outflow. Its main external rival, the PAC, was hopelessly underfunded and disorganized to offer similar hospitality, although many of the BCM influenced students were prime recruits for the PAC's Africanist image. The ANC/SACP had a distinct advantage due to its access to substantial material and military support from the USSR, something the PAC never quite managed with their patrons, the Chinese.²²

Such access to support is often looked at in a one-dimensional way by South African struggle historians and analysts, where the focus remains on its practical importance and advantages (for example Lodge, 1983). What is not mentioned though, is the potential baggage that comes with such support (i.e. methods of organization and control). The influence in the case of the ANC/SACP, of Stalinist methods and theory, was to prove increasingly debilitating despite access to substantial material resources. The influence was also shown in the propaganda of the ANC/SACP which, on the international level, continued to mimic Soviet Cold War rhetoric. In a speech to the United Nations soon after the 1976 uprising ANC President-General Oliver Tambo, himself ideologically aligned more closely to liberal bourgeois democracy than to Soviet 'communism', reflected the influence thus:

While imperialism...predicates its own survival on the survival of the white minority regime...the confrontation between the liberation movement as a whole, on the one hand, and the forces of imperialism, on the other, cannot but grow sharper, for a strategy for the strengthening of the criminal apartheid regime is simultaneously a strategy for the destruction of the forces within South Africa that seek to bring about a genuinely popular change...The same idea [of a non-radical solution] is conveyed in statements by representatives of the United States government. We take this to be a very categorical and clear statement by the world's leading imperialist power...that it is prepared to accept only such a solution as would leave its interest in South Africa intact. Neither the African National Congress nor our people as a whole can ever accept such a solution.²³

What Tambo did not grasp, despite the obvious sincerity of his opposition to the recent role of the United States, was that his own organization's strategic way forward (heavily influenced as it was by Stalinism) was leading in the very direction stated as unacceptable (i.e. a non-radical solution).²⁴

With 'new blood' in their ranks and the high expectations of increased guerrilla activities inside the country the ANC/SACP's main strategic focus, that of armed struggle, was faced with its first major test. In its efforts to meet this test the organization had formed the Operations Unit (OU), whose task it was "to reintroduce armed struggle as quickly and as evidently as possible."²⁵ As it turned out, it took the ANC four years before its armed struggle registered substantially increased activity. Over the period 1977-80 the amount of guerrilla activity inside the country totaled eighty-two 'incidents', and from 1981-84 there was a total of one hundred and ninety-four 'incidents'.²⁶ Much of the armed activity mirrored the sabotage campaign of the early 1960's, with small units attacking military and administrative targets.

There were three main goals associated with the ANC/SACP's emphasis on the resurgence of armed activity: firstly, catalyzing internal mass mobilization and political activity centered around the ANC/SACP; secondly, showing the 'people' that the ANC/SACP was the only 'serious' liberation movement willing to engage the enemy and defend the 'people' with the force of arms (i.e. armed propaganda); and lastly the armed seizure of power. The degree to which the last goal, armed seizure of power, was 'realistic' or believed possible by the leadership is open to debate. Regardless of the answers, what is clear is that the majority of MK cadres and the broad 'mass' inside South Africa took armed seizure of power seriously; that is what matters. As far as the other two (more practicable?) goals were concerned, by 1978 there had been some success with the second (aided by the absence of any competition), but the goal of spurring mass political struggle had proved elusive.

The ANC/SACP was a victim of its own misdirected strategies. Still clinging to the centrality of a guerrilla strategy designed to ignite mass resistance and seize power from the apartheid regime, the organization was blinded to the realities of its failure. The international and internal 'changes' that the ANC/SACP saw as strengthening their strategy were, if anything, confirmation that an externalized guerrilla strategy could be little more than what it had become - armed propaganda.

The apartheid state was nowhere close to being militarily threatened, the geo-political obstacles were formidable, and the internal conditions necessary for successful guerrilla-type operations were tenuous at best.²⁷ The only 'change' that seemed to be working in favor of the ANC/SACP was the growing anti-apartheid sentiment in the international arena. This 'success' had little to do with the strategic success of a guerrilla insurgency supposedly aimed at overthrowing the enemy by force and ushering in a transformative 'national democratic revolution'. For all the

clearly stated proclamations of the 'inevitable' correctness of its strategic formulations, the ANC/SACP's practice had not borne this out. The main 'problem' was actually quite simple; the ANC leadership was not being honest, either to itself or to those it was leading.

Competing for 'Hearts and Minds'

The voice of the mass democratic movement, headed by the ANC and its allies is winning the hearts and minds of growing numbers from amongst all the oppressed.²⁸

ANC NEC statement (January 8, 1982)

By the time of the NEC statement the ANC was confident that it had achieved the status it always claimed, that of 'sole legitimate representative' of the South African 'oppressed'. Although this claim was both pretentious and dismissive of the complexities of the South African liberation struggle, the ANC certainly held center stage. Increased sabotage actions, now conceptualized as 'armed propaganda' and backed by dissemination of ANC iconography, plus the organization's ample international support had given the ANC a high profile in the absence of much competition.²⁹

Back in 1978 the ANC's top two organizational bodies, the National Executive Council (NEC) and the Revolutionary Council (RC), had met to discuss the need for building a internal revolutionary mass base (something the ANC had been talking about since 1963). Emphasizing that armed activity by itself could not build such a base, the meeting stressed the need to engage in legal and semi-legal internal politics in which "general mass uprisings would play a vital role."³⁰

This meeting also established a new body called the Politico-Military Strategy Commission (PMSC) that would "review ANC strategy and tactics as well as operational

structures."³¹ The formation of yet another over-seeing body was indicative of the burgeoning bureaucracy that the externalized ANC/SACP was creating. There were now at least three major decision-making structures and several sub-structures to implement and monitor strategy and tactics. In all of these structures the same top leadership was represented; people like Oliver Tambo (as always the honorary chairperson), Joe Slovo, and Joe Modise. This growing bureaucratization and wearing of multiple 'hats' by top individuals, severely hampered the actual practice of stated objectives. It was also damaging to the development of democratic decision-making and introduced an elitist 'follow us' mentality.

This chosen 'new' direction went 'public' in 1982 with a series of debates published in the pages of the SACP's official journal *The African Communist*, centered around the merits of "arming the masses" and "people's war." The 'new' thinking no doubt played a role in the ANC's popularly received armed propaganda efforts, but as in the past, practice belied theory. The hard reality was that the ANC was nowhere near building the kind of internal structures that could generate 'mass uprisings' leading to an implicitly hoped for insurrectionary seizure of power.³² As had been the case before, internal and international events and conditions overtook the ANC/SACP's carefully planned scenarios. And, as before, the subsequent dialectical logic led it to a politics of accommodation. It was as though the 'hearts and minds' campaign became the be-all and end-all of the liberation struggle, casting its net so widely as to make revolutionaries of anyone remotely cognizant of the inevitable downfall of apartheid (except of course, the 'colonialist-settler regime'³³).

Within the previously predictable politics of the apartheid state, some rather substantive shifts began to take place in the late 1970's. Spurred on, as we have seen, by an increasingly jittery domestic capital, apartheid

authorities sought ways to reform the system without any subsequent loss of political or social control. The new cabinet of P.W. Botha (National Party leader elected to the Premiership in the 1978 elections) set out to do just that. Botha had come to power on the backs of the security establishment, who wanted to implement a 'total strategy' plan as a means of combating both 'revolutionary' resistance and winning the 'hearts and minds' of non-whites through economic and political cooptation.³⁴

The first 'shot' in this strategic war was the formation of the Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions set up by the state to investigate labor relations and conditions, followed by recommendations for reform in education and 'influx control' of the black urban population. As other commentators have pointed out (Lodge, 1983; Marx, 1992; Callinicos, 1986), the implementation of reforms flowing from these developments presented the apartheid state with myriad problems. The legalization of trade union activity, increased access to skills enhancement, and relaxation of controls over the movement and employment of the urban population provided the space for renewed resistance by both the black and white working class. For the black working class the reforms allowed for the phenomenal growth of militant independent trade unionism, the numbers of registered union members increasing from 220,000 in 1980 to 670,000 in 1983.³⁵ For the white working class the reforms represented a direct threat to established privileges and a good reason to question their historic support for the National Party; they increasingly turned to more far-right options such as the newly formed breakaway from the National Party, the Herstigte Nasionale Party.

The main thrust of the Botha reform measures was to weaken the economic pressure points within the apartheid system while still guaranteeing the essential features of white domination. Botha and his securocrats, in trying to achieve both, released social and political forces that they

then could not control. In their desperate attempts to find allies³⁶, further attempts were made at cooptation: the Indian and Coloured communities were invited to join in the Tri-cameral Parliament system (1984); increased economic opportunities were extended to the small black middle class; and the recently created 'independent states' (Ciskei, Transkei, Venda, Bophutatswana), 'self-governing' homelands (Kwa-Zulu, KaNgwane, KwaNdebele, Lebowa, Gazankulu, Qwaqwa), and local municipal authorities were offered as the locus for petite bourgeoisie ethnically driven capital accumulation and limited political power. While the effects of these measures on the growth of a petite bourgeoisie and aspirant black bourgeoisie should not be underestimated, the net result was to widen the fault lines of apartheid capitalism.³⁷ The other side of the 'total strategy', combating what Botha and his securocrats saw as the revolutionary onslaught, was becoming the more attractive option.

Despite the limited military threat of the ANC/SACP's armed propaganda efforts, MK did manage to pull off a few spectacular attacks that contributed to both the apartheid state's fears of a revolutionary onslaught and to raising its symbolic appeal among the 'masses'. Between 1980-82 MK launched mine and rocket attacks on the Sasolburg coal-to-oil refinery, the South African Defense Forces (SADF) Voortrekkerhooftge headquarters, and the Koeberg nuclear power station in Cape Town.³⁸ These attacks no doubt provided Botha with the excuse to launch his own raids and bombing runs into neighboring Mozambique and Angola where MK was now based. Partly to keep his security allies happy and partly to ensure that none of the 'Frontline'³⁹ states would be able to lessen their economic dependence on their apartheid neighbor, Botha unleashed a systematic campaign of destabilization.

Using a stick and carrot approach, with the emphasis falling on the former, the apartheid forces waged counter-

revolutionary terror. Not content with using its own forces, the apartheid state funded, armed, and protected both UNITA and the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) as proxy armies designed to wreak maximum damage on the infrastructure of Angola and Mozambique respectively.⁴⁰ The cost borne these countries was immense.⁴¹ Even if they could not succeed in overthrowing the respective governments of these countries, Botha and his cronies made sure they would never be able to sustain an alternative economic and political vision.

The apartheid offensive was, of course, also directed at taking away the capacity of the ANC/SACP to carry forward their armed struggle. Mozambique had been the one place where MK could directly infiltrate South Africa, and what successes MK had managed were in no small part due to the use of Mozambique as a forward base of operations. All that changed when Mozambique, seeking a tradeoff, signed the Nkomati Accord with the apartheid state in 1984. In return for barring MK from its turf, Mozambique received Botha's assurance that South Africa would end its support of RENAMO. The Accord turned out to be a chimera. MK lost its forward base but RENAMO was kept well oiled by the apartheid military. Combining this regional destabilization with increasingly frequent shows of internal repression including the introduction of death squads⁴², Botha seemed to be having much more success on the repression than the reform front.

The effect of this destabilization on the ANC/SACP was the growth of organizational paralysis and authoritarian practices. Often too busy with international diplomatic commitments and planning sessions, and trying to cope with the apartheid state's counter-revolutionary campaign, the leadership lost touch with what was going on inside their own organization. Seeing an apartheid agent hidden in every corner, the ANC/SACP's security department Mbokodo ('the stone that crushes') began to conduct wholesale arrests and

harsh interrogation techniques at recently set up detention camps/centers.⁴³ The combined effects were particularly acute within MK. While the leadership continued to make administrative adjustments (a new Political-Military Council was formed) and issue new plans for a people's war, an increasing demoralization set in amongst large numbers of MK rank-and-file.

The vast majority of MK was situated in Angolan camps where many had been for years, ever since fleeing South Africa. Forced to live under harsh conditions, unable to go fight inside their own country, and increasingly engaged in major battles on the side of the MPLA against UNITA many began to openly criticize and challenge the leadership. These developments eventually resulted in a series of mutinies within Angolan camps in which there was armed confrontation between 'loyalist' and 'dissident' MK forces, followed by the detention of large numbers of the mutineers.⁴⁴ As an indication of how completely out of touch much of the leadership had become, top ANC/SACP leaders were holding a meeting in Luanda to discuss another Slovo paper on extending the 'people's war' at the same time that the mutineers were demanding that they be sent back to South Africa to fight.⁴⁵ In such an environment it was not surprising that many in the ANC/SACP leadership wanted to concentrate their efforts in the broader international arena, where events seemed to be less troublesome.

Viva⁴⁶ Internationalism

The onset of structural crisis in South Africa during the 1970's had already given warning to leading sections of international and domestic capital that changes had to be made if a radical anti-capitalist revolution was to be avoided. To this end one of the major capitalist philanthropic institutions in the United States, the Rockefeller Foundation, funded a study in 1981 (which included a section on South Africa) entitled, *South Africa:*

Time is Running Out. It made several recommendations: that the United States must push for genuine power sharing in South Africa; assistance should be given for the economic development of the Southern African region so as to lessen their dependence on apartheid South Africa; that the arms embargo against South Africa should be expanded; and that United States companies should halt new investment.⁴⁷ What was going on? Even with the recognition that every aspect of the Report was not necessarily endorsed by all sections of international capital, it exemplified a definite shift in perspective. The ANC/SACP could not have put forward a better argument for international 'involvement' in their anti-apartheid struggle.

Not long after the release of the Rockefeller Report, ANC President Oliver Tambo met with representatives of leading United States corporations and banks.⁴⁸ At the meeting Tambo gave assurances that their presence in a post-apartheid would be welcome, subject to new regulations that an ANC government would institute.⁴⁹ Although this meeting probably represented no more than a 'sounding out' session, it was important for other reasons. It confirmed a long-standing strategic principle that had become obscured by all the harsh Cold War rhetoric and violence; that the ANC/SACP was not averse to dealing with anyone who could be a potential anti-apartheid ally.

On the other side of the coin, international capital (represented in this case by leading United States capitalists) was belatedly acknowledging the importance of the ANC/SACP to any future economic and political South African scenario. This was confirmed by recently retired World Bank President Robert McNamara (also a former United States Secretary of Defense) in a speech delivered at Wits University in Johannesburg on October 21, 1982. He argued that United States policy should "be based on the recognition that black nationalism in South Africa is a struggle whose eventual success can at most be delayed- and

at immense cost - but not permanently denied...²⁰ Such attitudes were not limited to the Americans. British capital, deeply involved in the South African economy since its entry into the club of modern capitalism, also grasped the necessity of dealing with the ANC/SACP, their anti-liberation rhetoric aside. According to one leading ANC member, Tambo met with representatives of British banks and corporations several times in the early 1980's.²¹

Although all of these meetings were quite consistent with the ANC/SACP's international campaign to isolate the apartheid state, their importance lies in the way the two sides strategically conceptualized their respective agendas. The ANC/SACP was all too ready to enlist the anti-apartheid support of the 'international community' in their broad 'national democratic revolution' without a corresponding analysis, reflected in practice, of the specific strategic agenda of certain international actors.

I would argue that for the core western capitalist states (e.g. the United States, Britain, France, Germany etc.) and representatives of international capital, there exists a political/economic agenda that reflects their own strategic national and/or material interests. This specific agenda, while adaptable to changing international conditions, consists of a fundamental commitment to implement the following: a process of accumulation through the exploitation (in varied forms) of human and natural resources in the 'Third World'; the use of various military and financial resources and institutions to influence the struggle for, and exercise of, political/economic power in the 'Third World'; through these same resources and institutions, to enforce the adoption of a 'free-market' capitalist ideology and practice; and to create new, and/or support existing, social and political forces that will be in direct opposition to any revolutionary organization/activity which might fundamentally threaten these interests.²²

As will be discussed later, the absence of any serious analysis of this agenda, reflected in strategic action, was to seriously affect the willingness and ability of the ANC/SACP to achieve the goal of transformative liberation. As it stood, the ANC/SACP was content to adopt the tactic of talking to its different constituencies with different voices.

In their international campaign for the isolation of the apartheid state, the ANC/SACP's argument that international capital should disinvest found increasing resonance among corporate and finance capital.⁵³ The majority of the anti-apartheid movements that now existed in Europe and the United States backed the ANC/SACP's call on moral grounds, generating active public pressure on investors in South Africa to desist from aiding the 'criminal apartheid regime'. However, in the early stages of disinvestment the main impetus was not moral, but rather hard-nosed capitalist considerations. As David Hough, head of the Investor Responsibility Research Centre, a non-governmental institution funded from corporate, university, and pension fund sources, argued in 1983: "Internal political risk studies rather than protests of pressure groups have influenced bank decisions about loans to South Africa."⁵⁴ Whatever the motivations, the ANC/SACP saw the gathering campaign as a confirmation that their 'international pillar' of struggle was succeeding.

While major sections of international capital had already grasped the necessity of preparing for a post-apartheid South Africa, most government officials lagged behind. The ANC/SACP were not unaware that the actions of certain western governments were designed to push for an accommodationist solution to the 'apartheid problem'. A prime example was the Reagan administration's policy of constructive engagement. As argued by its main proponent, Under-Secretary for African Affairs Chester Crocker, constructive engagement stressed the need for close

cooperation with the apartheid state in the hope of persuading them to "democratize." Similarly, the policy sought to pressure the "national liberation movements" into accepting an "evolutionary non-violent" process of democratization.⁵⁵ The 'constructive' methods chosen (diplomatic, material, and indirect military support to the apartheid state), made it crystal clear to the ANC/SACP that the underlying goal of such a policy was a deracialized capitalism in which 'strategic' western interests would be guaranteed. As such the ANC/SACP issued scathing attacks like the following ANC NEC statement of January 8, 1983:

Its (the United States) support for the apartheid regime consists precisely in encouraging these fascists to intensify their counter-offensive and in guaranteeing them immunity from punitive international action. Every crime that the Pretoria regime commits, be it in South Africa, Namibia or elsewhere, bears Washington's stamp of approval. This regime goes into action backed by the logistic, financial, and political support of the United States. The apartheid regime, acting in its own right and in the furtherance of the global strategy of the United States, constitutes a strikeforce for the accomplishment of the counter-revolutionary objective of defeating the progressive forces of Southern Africa, including SWAPO and the ANC, and transforming our region into an exclusive economic, political, and military preserve of the imperialist world.⁵⁶

What the ANC/SACP seemed unable to grasp was that the ultimate strategic goal of both ('friendly' and 'unfriendly') international capital and western governments such as the United States and Britain, was a deracialized capitalism.⁵⁷ The different tactics used to help achieve such a goal by both 'groups' were mirrored in their respective 'world-views' and what was perceived as satisfying immediate short-term interests.

Such a complementary goal does not imply some sort of conspiracy theory emanating from the bowels of corporate headquarters and government buildings. It is merely the

recognition of the specific and complex strategy and tactics of political and economic representatives of capital. The South African 'question' was not the sole possession of the ANC/SACP and the apartheid state, and their respective strategies and tactics were not competing in an international vacuum. While garnering international support is one of the essential tasks of any liberation movement, it was the way in which the ANC/SACP did so that raises serious questions about strategies for genuine national liberation. By extending its 'united front' approach to the international arena, the ANC/SACP was providing open invitations to a host of incredibly powerful forces to play potentially important roles in influencing the direction and character of the South African liberation struggle. The implications of this will be developed in the next chapter, but suffice to say that by the mid-1980's the ANC/SACP had begun to build upon the already existing foundation of an international politics of accommodation.

Internal Mobilization

While the ANC/SACP and the apartheid state were devoting large doses of energy and time to regional and international 'work', the internal situation heated up. Botha's attempts at reform were making little headway in achieving their main goal of coopting large numbers of the non-white population. A good example was the formation of the Tricameral Parliament in May 1983, designed to bring Coloreds and Indians into the political 'main stream'. It was only the Botha government that was surprised when the subsequent election was boycotted by the vast majority of both Colored and Indian people.

The apartheid state was also unwilling to make the necessary political reforms that might have received favorable responses from the majority of the population and the ANC/SACP; and the deep structural economic crisis made it impossible for Botha and the regime to buy their way out.

At the same time that he had introduced the Tricameral Parliament, Botha had also sneaked in provisions granting the President vast executive powers. Instead of the quiescence desired, increasing numbers of workers, students, and unemployed increased their economic and political demands. Most of the issues central to this increased activism were focused on local grassroots economic and social conditions (wages, education, housing, rent, electricity) and political involvement (municipal council representation, policing etc.). These demands, and the need to organize around them, led to the phenomenal growth of community civic associations, and organizations formed around varying social poles (students, women, religion, trade unions, ethnicity).⁵⁸

The desire to bring together these disparate struggles on a national level to combat Botha's powers and reforms led to the formation of the National Forum in June, 1983. Present at its opening conference were representatives of AZAPO, the Cape Action League (under the leadership of Neville Alexander), and a few ANC-aligned 'charterists'.⁵⁹ Shunning the 'charterist' tradition as liberal and ethnically defined, the National Forum adopted an 'Azanian Manifesto' which called for a 'antiracialist' struggle against capitalism and apartheid. However accurate their criticisms of the 'charterists', the National Forum exhibited an ignorance of strategic organizing. The Forum, which itself was ridden by ideological disunity, placed far too much emphasis on the power of ideology as a mobilizing tool. As a result, they severely limited their scope of influence, effectively cut themselves off from the grassroots, and compromised their ability to act as a militant unifier. Whatever chance the Forum had of sharing a common platform with the charterists was quickly struck down by the externalized ANC NEC. In a statement sounding very much like the work of Stalinist ideologues, the NEC denounced

...those who, while posing as socialists...and defenders of Black pride, seek to divide the people and divert them from the pursuit of the goals enshrined in the Freedom Charter. Through their activities, these elements show hatred for the Charter and mass united action, no less virulent than that displayed by the Pretoria regime.⁶⁰

The 'charterists' quickly disassociated themselves from the Forum and undertook efforts to launch their own national organization.

These efforts eventually led to the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in August, 1983. Conceived as an umbrella organization of all 'progressive' people and groupings, the UDF consisted of groups and individuals from every imaginable sector of South African society. Although the UDF did not openly align itself with any other political formation it was obvious from its inception that the UDF reflected the same strategic approach as the ANC/SACP. The UDF's initial declaration declared that

we, the freedom loving people of South Africa, say with one voice to the whole world that we,

- cherish the vision of a united, democratic South Africa based on the will of the people,
- will strive for the unity of all people through united action against the evils of apartheid, economic, and all other forms of exploitation.

And, in our march to a free and just South Africa, we are guided by these noble ideals

- we stand for the creation of a true democracy in which all South Africans will participate in the government of our country;
- we stand for a single non-racial, unfragmented South Africa⁶¹

If the National Forum had made ideology too important, the UDF attempted to make it almost non-existent. Stressing the strategic primacy of the unity of the 'South African people', the UDF consciously sought to project a non-

ideological image. Taking the ANC/SACP formulation of the 'nation' to heart, the UDF welcomed anyone who opposed apartheid in its ranks, although it helped if you were a 'charterist'. Much like the ANC/SACP, the UDF leadership argued that national unity required the suppression of class divisions and adopting the broadest possible program of inclusiveness. This was reflected in the make-up of the UDF, whose ranks included organizations ranging from the all-white, all-female, and decidedly upper-middle class Black Sash, to radical and predominantly working class youth groups such as the Tumahole Youth Congress. By steering clear of potentially divisive ideological formulations, the UDF succeeded in bringing together the largest and most socially diverse organization yet seen in South Africa.⁶²

Although this strategic approach was partly explained by the UDF leadership's desire to operate legally, in reality it reflected a specific ideological choice. The UDF's claims of purely strategic considerations over those of ideology were specious. Ideology, of whatever stripe, informs strategy and to claim that one has no ideology is in itself an ideological choice. In other words, the UDF was using a particular ideological approach to conceptualize the 'nation' and opposition to those it considered outside of it. That it happened to be an approach which stressed social/class inclusiveness made it no less ideological.⁶³

While UDF membership was spread across a broad social and class spectrum, the national leadership consisted mainly of a middle-class intelligentsia, most of whom were old ANC stalwarts or recently converted charterists (former BCM adherents). These included leaders such as Allan Boesak, Frank Chikane (church affiliated), Mewa Ramgobin (Indian activist), Albertina Sisulu, Archie Gumede, Murphy Morobe, and Patrick 'Terror' Lekota (all civic/township association activists). Throughout the first year of its existence the UDF conducted high profile campaigns against the Botha reform agenda. Directed as they were by the national

leadership these campaigns took on a top-down approach with local struggles generally being relegated, for the time being, to the background. In its bid to create as broad a united front as possible the UDF also began to woo white and black capitalists, a move that brought the UDF financial assistance and a constituency whose conceptualization of national liberation stretched its meaning to breaking point.⁶⁴

As one would expect, the ANC/SACP fully backed the UDF and in particular one of its first campaigns whose focus was on the demand for the release of Mandela. The campaign signaled the beginning of what became the idolization of Nelson Mandela as the embodiment of the liberation struggle.⁶⁵ The UDF provided the ANC/SACP with an ally whose strategic approach was generally consistent with its own, an internal base within which it could now popularize its national democratic message, and a mast on which to fly the ANC/SACP internal flag.⁶⁶

Despite organizational problems, and the blows inflicted by the apartheid state's regional destabilization, internal developments (and the international campaigns) stood out as a beacon of hope for the ANC/SACP. At least this was bright enough for the ANC NEC to issue forth with more talk of the seizure of power. It confidently declared:

The central and immediate question of South African politics is the overthrow of the white minority regime, the seizure of power and the uprooting...of the entire apartheid system of colonial and racist domination, fascist tyranny, the super-exploitation of the black majority, and imperialist aggression and expansionism. The question will be and is being settled, in struggle, within the borders of our country and nowhere else.⁶⁷

Many inside South Africa were to take this call very seriously even if that was not the case for the very leaders issuing the call.

NOTES

¹Slovo (1976), pp.148-149. This quote is part of Slovo's 'No Middle Road' article which argued that the struggle for national liberation could not stop half-way (i.e. at a bourgeois nationalist solution). It had to be carried through, under the leadership of a revolutionary party and leadership (SACP), to radical and fundamental transformation leading in the direction of socialism.

²There had been tremendous growth of the black working class in the preceding years. Between 1951 and 1980 the number of Africans employed in manufacturing rose from 360,000 to 1,103,000, and in mining from 449,000 to 768,000. Growth, particularly in the manufacturing sector, had been greatest in the mid-late 1960's. See Alex Callinicos, "Marxism and Revolution in South Africa," *International Socialism*, No.31 (Spring, 1986), p.28.

³There has been a great deal of debate around the actual type and character of the crisis that manifested itself in the early 1970's and has continued, in varying intensity, until the present. The specifics of this debate are far beyond the scope of this work. However, the most coherent explanation seems to be situated in the 'crisis of overaccumulation' thesis. This thesis sees the crisis in terms of the structural limitations of capitalism generally, exacerbated by the added burden of specifically South African racial capitalism.

In short, the South African economy had reached a point where the manufacturing sector was producing far too many luxury consumer goods for the limited South African market (limited yet further by artificial apartheid barriers to consumption). Furthermore, financial capital which was not channeled into production turned to new, unprecedented avenues for speculation. This is characterized by the phrase over-accumulation. In their attempts to overcome such a crisis the apartheid state and domestic capital tried to corporatize labor, develop a black petite bourgeoisie consumption class, streamline production (which led to mass unemployment), and find export markets for over-accumulated capital. Thus, even though the crisis experienced by South Africa has its own particular characteristics it is located within a larger structural crisis of capitalism (as exhibited by what has been happening globally). Since a solution to such a crisis cannot be found within the system itself (reforms will always prove temporary fixes) there has to be both a political and economic 'revolution' if any long-term answers are to be found.

For a well argued case for this perspective see Patrick Bond, *Commanding Heights and Community Control* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1991); and by the same author, "The Limits of Capitalist Reform Under Conditions of Capitalist Crisis," paper presented to the Marxist Theory Seminar, 6 May 1993, at University of the Western Cape.

⁴See Slovo (1976).

⁵Ibid.

⁶For a good discussion addressing the issue of why the strikes originated in Durban see Lodge (1983), pp.327-328.

⁷It was some of these more radical/liberal whites who joined up with workers in new worker advisory organizations. These were to constitute the beginning of new, independent, 'workerist' unions which were to replace 'political' unions like SACTU as representative of South African workers. It was this 'workerist' direction that was to come into direct conflict with the ANC/SACP vision of worker organizations as subservient to the primacy of the political demands of the 'national democratic' struggle.

For further discussion see David Hemson, "Trade unionism and the struggle for liberation in South Africa," *Capital and Class* 6 (1978); and Baruch Hirson, *Year of Fire, Year of Ash* (London: Zed Press, 1979).

⁸All of these structures, including several other smaller organizations such as the Black Allied Workers Union (BAWU), fall under what has commonly been termed the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). Its most outstanding leader was the late Steve Biko, murdered by the apartheid police in 1977 for his activities. After his death the BCM was to split in numerous directions, with the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO) being the largest and most influential.

For analyses of the BCM philosophy and movement see Steve Biko, *I Write What I Like*, Aelred Stubbs ed., (New York: Harper & Row, 1986); Robert Fatton, *Black Consciousness in South Africa* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986); and Gail Gerhardt, *Black Power in South Africa: The Evolution of an Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

⁹In Marx (1992), p.52.

¹⁰Bernard Magubane, *South Africa: From Soweto to Uitenhage* (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 1989) ,p.11.

¹¹Ellis & Sechaba (1992), pp.72-73. Chris Hani had emerged as a leading light in MK (the same in the SACP), and more importantly he seemed to have the complete confidence and support of rank-and-file cadres. He was to rise meteorically in MK, eventually becoming its number 2 man and being largely responsible for keeping MK together during the major troubles of the 1980's.

¹²See Barbara Rogers, *Divide and Rule* (London: International Defense and Aid Fund, 1980).

¹³For relevant discussions on the reformist attempts and their social and political consequences throughout the 1970's and 1980's see Mike Morris, "Redistributive Reform, WHAM ban, thank you Malan," *Indicator South Africa* (Issue Focus, n.d.), pp.107-113; Anthony Marx, *Lessons of Struggle: South African Internal Opposition, 1960-1990* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1992), chps. 2-3; and Alex Callinicos, "Marxism and Revolution in South Africa," *International Socialism*, No.31 (Spring, 1986), pp.3-66.

¹⁴Cited in Pomeroy (1986), p.123.

¹⁵See Bond (1993), p.7. Bond argues that this is an absolutely necessary process in all capitalist systems under crisis (a condition endemic to capitalism itself). By devaluing capital in this way, the possibilities of a new round of growth are heightened.

¹⁶For the full story behind these developments, with specific focus on the role of the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), see John Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1978).

The United States government had earlier shown its hand on the 'South Africa' question in National Security Memorandum 39 (1969). It stated that "for the foreseeable future South Africa will be able to maintain internal stability and effectively counter insurgent activity." Further on it argued that "the whites are here to stay and the only way that constructive change can come about is through them. There is no hope for the Blacks to gain the political rights they seek through violence..." In foreshadowing future policy it went on to say that "we can, through selective relaxation of our stance towards the white regimes, encourage some modification of their current racial and colonial policies..." [McKinley (1986), p.12].

¹⁷As Marx (1992), pp.66-67 points out, the initial spark for the 1976 student uprising came from a small group of BCM-affiliated students in Soweto, organized under the banner of the South African Student Movement (SASM). The national leadership of the BCM structures had little to do with the initial demonstrations, but after the harsh response by the state police, took up the call for further action.

The vast majority of students involved had no connection with the externally-based national liberation movements. One of the 1976 activists Murphy Morobe (later to become a major figure in the United Democratic Front) put it this way: "we thought we were the first people to fight the government. We did not know about the Defiance campaign and the school boycotts in the 1950's." [Ellis & Sechaba (1992), p.83].

¹⁸ Marx (1992), p.68. The black consciousness 'ideology' showed both its power and limitations. At one level it has succeeded in lessening the subservient attitude it was so concerned to combat, but on the other it had no theoretical or strategic base from which to organize and direct the resistance that followed. While the ANC/SACP possessed such a base, it had little internal organizational presence.

One interpretation plays down the role of black consciousness as primarily responsible for the uprising (Hirson, 1979). Hirson points to the resurgence of black working class resistance, beginning with the 1973 strikes, as more important in explaining why the response took on

such an assertive character. For a good overview of the differing perspectives see Lodge (1983), pp.330-336.

I would argue that it was a combination of the rhetorical pull of black consciousness, increased urban working class resistance, the regional events of 1974-1975, and the deteriorating economic situation which contributed to the general uprising.

¹⁹ For the two opposing perspectives see SACTU, *Political Report of the General Secretary to the National Executive Committee of SACTU*, January 1978 (booklet); and "The Workers' Movement and SACTU: A struggle for Marxist policies," (booklet, n.d). Some of the contributors to the last mentioned booklet (David Hemson, Paula Ensor, Martin Legassick) were to form the Marxist Workers' Tendency (MWT) within the ANC. They were later expelled from the ANC, and resurfaced after 1990 to announce their presence within the ANC as an open tendency. This was despite continued hostility to the MWT by the ANC and SACP leadership which saw it as underhandedly attempting (through entryism) to inject a Trotskyite version of socialist (nationalist) politics into the ANC.

²⁰ One estimate of the ANC/SACP presence inside South Africa states that there were, at most 50 formal units (presumably made up mostly of MK cadres and recruits) totaling 200 people. [See Howard Barrell, *MK: The ANC's Armed Struggle* (London: Penguin, 1990), p.32.]

²¹ One other source of ANC support was to come from the substantial numbers of BCM leaders and activists imprisoned on Robben Island. Having come into direct contact with the imprisoned leadership of the ANC the majority of BCM activists were won over to the ANC/SACP. Robben Island became known as the 'University', where activists 'graduated' under the tutelage of people like Mandela, Sisulu, and Mbeki. It was these graduates who were to play leading roles in the UDF in the 1980's.

²² Since its turn to exile the PAC had been wracked by internal organizational and individual feuds. With its emphasis on returning the land to the indigenous black population, the PAC had turned to Maoist texts and in turn China for ideological and material sustenance. However, the PAC's ability to forge any sort of cohesive theoretical or practical basis for struggle continued to be minimal. See Benjamin Pogrud, *Sobukwe and Apartheid* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1991).

²³ Oliver Tambo, "Support our People until Power is restored to Them," Address to the Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly (United Nations), New York, October 26 1976 in E.S. Reddy ed., *Oliver Tambo: Apartheid and the International Community* (London: Kiptown Books, 1991), p.70.

²⁴ This point is reiterated here, without a full discussion (see Chapter Two), to emphasize the dialectic taking place and the essence of the ANC/SACP's macro-strategy (i.e. negotiations).

²⁵ Barrell (1990), p.32. According to Barrell, this hastily convened set-up was to create major communication, co-ordination and strategic problems for MK. There already existed the Revolutionary Council and another sub-body, the Internal Reconstruction and

Development (IRD), responsible for political work. The result was that one hand didn't necessarily know what the other one was doing, and there arose serious problems in carrying out joint military and political work as called for by the ANC/SACP's strategic guidelines.

²⁶There are varying claims to the number of 'incidents', with the ANC/SACP figures usually higher and the apartheid state's figures substantially lower. The statistics quoted come from neither. They were compiled by veteran ANC 'watcher' Tom Lodge. See Tom Lodge, "State of Exile: The African National Congress of South Africa, 1976-86," in Philip Frankel and Mark Swilling eds., *State, Resistance, and Change In South Africa* (London: Croom Helm, 1988), p.230.

²⁷The 'conditions' referred to are those which any guerrilla army needs to be an effective fighting and political force. They include the need for the guerrillas to be 'protected' and sustained by the indigenous population, the ability to establish secure 'bases' or refuges inside the country, and the need for an organized underground to carry through mainly political education and mobilization.

²⁸As cited in Thomas Karis, "The Resurgent African National Congress: Competing for Hearts and Minds in South Africa," in Thomas Callaghy ed., *South Africa in Southern Africa* (New York: Praeger, 1983), p.191.

²⁹The ANC/SACP's external presence had, by the early 1980's, taken on the appearance of a giant enterprise. Apart from the thousands of MK cadres in camps around the region, the organization had a large educational complex in Tanzania (Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College), administrative headquarters in Lusaka, several hundred ANC members studying at foreign universities, and a diplomatic presence in over 30 countries (London being the most important).

³⁰Barrell (1990), pp.37-40. Earlier in the year the ANC had sent a top-level delegation to Vietnam where they had been influenced by the Vietnamese 'people's war' perspective.

"Ibid.

³¹It is important to point out that the one common strategic goal underpinning all of the ANC/SACP's varied 'tactical' shifts, is that of a seizure of power. This point is indispensable to understanding why there is a fundamental contradiction between the ANC/SACP's stated strategy and the subsequent practice.

³²I use the phrase 'colonial settler regime' (which is most often associated with the PAC) as indication of the inter-connection between the ANC/SACP's practical politics and the PAC's philosophical allegiance to racial exclusivism. Although the ANC/SACP and its allies had a multi-racial composition, the way in which the organization pursued its goal of 'national democratic revolution' was infused with a predominantly racial logic. Since the ANC/SACP wanted to win the 'hearts and minds' of anyone opposed to the apartheid system, the only serious enemy target had to be the white racialists in power and those that actively supported them. By setting up the main fight as one between this narrow enemy and its own agenda for 'national liberation' (which other

'progressive' forces could join), the ANC/SACP was, at the very least, unconsciously capitulating to a racially defined logic of liberation.

³⁴This 'total strategy' plan of the securocrats (those group of military and civilian Defense Ministry officials who adopted a hard-line security approach to threats against the apartheid system) took its lead from the writings of French General Andre Beaufre, who had fought in the Algerian war. Arguing that the task of maintaining the status quo was 80% political and 20% military, Beaufre provided a more sophisticated version of what American securocrats had attempted in Vietnam. For discussions about the securocrats and their perspectives and activities see Mark Swilling, "The Big Chill: From Reform to Counter-Revolution," *Indicator SA* (Issue Focus, n.d.), pp.89-95; and Brian Bunting, *The Rise of the South African Reich* (London: International Defense and Aid Fund, 1986).

³⁵Callinicos (1986), p.29. These new independent trade unions were, for the most part, separate from the ANC/SACP-aligned SACTU which consisted of unions such as the South African Allied Workers Union (SAAWU) and the General and Allied Workers Union (GAWU). By 1984 the independent unions included: the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU), a non-racial federation with nine affiliated unions comprising 106,000 members; the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA), heavily influenced by black consciousness and with ten affiliated unions comprising 148,000 members [CUSA was dominated by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM)].

³⁶On the international front, the apartheid state had been receiving substantial support from international capital. Despite the international uproar that followed the Soweto revolt, the apartheid state was able to secure access to large amounts of capital, mainly through the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Between 1976-1982 the IMF 'loaned' almost one and a half billion dollars to the apartheid state [See Vishnu Padayachee, "Apartheid South Africa and the International Monetary Fund," *Transformation* 3 (1987), p.39].

³⁷Although the reforms proved to have a catalyzing effect on resistance to the apartheid state, they also introduced powerful forces of cooptation and division. The 'independent' and 'self-governing' homelands unleashed ethnic and class forces which were increasingly difficult for the liberation movements and the black working class to ignore. Of those representative of such forces, Gatsha Buthelezi and his Kwa-Zulu based Inkata movement would prove to be the most enduring and troublesome.

Additionally, although the black middle class was small in relative terms the new opportunities for its consolidation and growth (along with that of the Indian and Coloured population) provided a stronger petite bourgeoisie presence among those opposed to apartheid. It should be remembered that the 'old-line' ANC/SACP leadership in exile and in prison came from this class background. Its general rise throughout the 1980's was to be specifically reflected in the leadership and strategy and tactics adopted by both the externalized ANC/SACP and its new internal allies.

³⁸Both the Sasolburg and Voortrekkerhooftge attacks were carried out by MK's Special Operations unit (under the overall command of Joe

Slovo). By the early 1980's the ANC/SACP had managed to set up MK structures in Mozambique and Angola, the former mainly used as a springboard for infiltration and the latter housing training camps for MK cadres. In addition, MK had a presence in Lesotho although it continued to be rather tenuous due to the vagaries of the Lesotho power structure.

What is telling is that one guerrilla, Barney Molokoane, was involved in both attacks, and when he was killed (along with other members of the unit) after the Voortrekkerhooftge attack the effectiveness of the Special Operations unit decreased. Certainly there were other factors involved in the ability of MK to continue to mount such attacks, but by the early 1980's MK had a force estimated at 5000 cadres. It was obvious that MK was not having a great deal of success at infiltrating cadres back into South Africa. This also applied to maintaining them there for substantial periods with the ability to launch a military campaign that would present the apartheid security forces with serious competition. [See Ellis & Sechaba (1992), pp.105-106; and *Submit or Fight* (1991), p.19].

³⁹The designation 'Frontline' came about as a result of the neighboring states being seen as on the frontline against apartheid. Besides the small states of Lesotho and Swaziland, both completely dependent on the apartheid state, the 'members' were Botswana, Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Tanzania. Namibia was considered as part of this grouping even though it was under South African occupation. For extended discussion and analyses of the experiences of Frontline states in the face of apartheid destabilization see Joseph Hanlon, *Beggar Your Neighbours* (London: James Currey, 1986); and David Martin and Phyllis Johnson eds., *Frontline Southern Africa: Destructive Engagement* (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1988).

⁴⁰The campaign of destabilization not only included Angola (Namibia) and Mozambique, but extended to Zimbabwe, Botswana, and Zambia as well. In the case of Mozambique and Angola, the apartheid state and its United States allies (mainly working through the CIA) saw themselves as anti-Communist crusaders, fighting to save western capitalist interests and also to prevent the USSR a strategic foothold in Southern Africa. The CIA was particularly concerned with the Cuban troop presence in Angola; the CIA saw the Cubans as Soviet surrogates. It was later to push the idea of 'linkage' between the withdrawal of Cuban troops and the granting of independence to Namibia.

⁴¹In the case of Mozambique there was huge toll as a result of the destabilization: in the area of education over 1,863 schools closed or destroyed by 1987; the debt (balance of payments) skyrocketed to \$3,4 billion by 1987 from being virtually zero in 1980; by the late 1980's an estimate of five hundred thousand people killed and over six million displaced. See Martin and Johnson (1988), pp.1-55.

⁴²See Patrick Laurence, *Death Squads. Apartheids Secret Weapon* (London: Penguin Forum Series, 1990). Also Jacques Pauw *In the Heart of the Whore* (Johannesburg: Southern Books, 1991).

⁴³The largest, and most infamous was Quatro (named after a notorious Johannesburg prison known as No.4) situated in northern Angola. It was only after the ANC/SACP's unbanning that news of Quatro

and the subsequent mutinies came to light. See Ellis and Sechaba (1992), chp.6; as well as the journal *Searchlight South Africa* 5, (1990). These events took place from 1981-1984.

⁴⁴See Ibid., (1990, 1992). Because of the sparse information available on the Angolan mutinies it is not possible to say with any certainty whether there were any age or ethnic cleavages that characterized the mutinies. It would certainly be interesting to have answers to these questions.

⁴⁵Ellis & Sechaba (1992), p.132. For a more sympathetic view towards the ANC leadership and the mutinies see Kasrils (1993), chps.3-5.

⁴⁶Originally a Portuguese term, borrowed by many in the South African liberation struggle, meaning 'long live'.

⁴⁷Study Commission on United States Policy toward Southern Africa, *South Africa: Time Running Out* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1981).

⁴⁸Karis (1983), p.195.

⁴⁹*New York Times*, 7 February, 1982.

⁵⁰*The Times* (London), October 22, 1982. Earlier, Carter administration United Nations representative Andrew Young had told a group of South African businessmen that the answer to their problems was to deracialize capitalism just like had happened in the U.S. South after the civil rights struggles of the late 1960's.

⁵¹Ben Turok, interview with author, October 1992. Turok says that liberal pro-ANC/SACP academics Anthony Sampson and Mary Benson, who were well connected in Britain, facilitated many of these meetings.

⁵²There are numerous studies of imperialism that offer differing interpretations of the 'agenda' that I have presented. Classical texts by Marx and Lenin (e.g. Lenin, *Imperialism: Highest Stage of Capitalism*) as well as many more contemporary writings on imperialism as noted in chapter one, support the proposition that capitalist states and international capital itself have a specific agenda. While this agenda has found many different and flexible forms of realization (e.g. through military means, through proxy political forces, through international financial institutions), I would argue that the core elements of it (as described in the text) remain the same.

⁵³For an extended analysis and discussion on the character and extent of corporate and finance capital divestment etc. see McKinley (1986), chp.3.

⁵⁴Cited in Pomeroy (1986), p.152. This is not to say that the pressure exerted by anti-apartheid groups had no effect at all. However, these groups, and their academic sympathizers in the west, have consistently overestimated their impact while ignoring the structural considerations that lent themselves to disinvestment decisions.

³⁵See Chester Crocker, "South Africa: Strategy for Change," *Foreign Affairs* 59, No.2 (Winter 1980/81), pp.323-357. For a critical analysis of the policy see Christopher Coker, *The United States and South Africa (1968-1985): Constructive Engagement and its Critics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1986).

³⁶ANC, "What is to be Done?," Statement of ANC NEC on January 8, 1983 (Lusaka: ANC booklet).

³⁷It is worth noting that the ANC/SACP was still heavily influenced by the USSR in its approach (and language) towards the United States. One wonders to what degree the decidedly moderate 'old guard' members of the NEC actually believed in what they were saying, as opposed to feeling the need to respond in a radical way for particular effect. As for the more 'radical' SACP members it was to be expected that they would support such attacks, if for no other reason than to mirror their Soviet allies. Indeed, the strategic content of the SACP's two-stage theorization of the national liberation struggle demanded that such statements remain rhetorical weapons. To actually resist western 'imperialism' in all its manifestations required a specifically anti-capitalist strategy of liberation that, at least for the moment, did not fit into the first stage so envisioned.

³⁸For an extended analysis of these groups see Marx (1992), chp.4.

³⁹The term 'charterist' was given to describe those who adhered to the principles of the Freedom Charter, and who were thus broadly supporters of the ANC/SACP.

⁴⁰Cited in Mzala, "The Freedom Charter and its Relevance Today," in *African National Congress, Selected Writings on the Freedom Charter: A Sechaba Commemorative Publication* (London: ANC, 1985), p.82 as cited in Marx (1992), p.120.

Such virulent responses reflected not only the Stalinist influences of the SACP (a favorite Stalinist response to criticism is to accuse the critic of being an agent of the 'enemy'), but what was to become a more general pattern of intolerance to anyone opposing the 'charterist' line as exhibited internally by the UDF.

⁴¹UDF, "Declaration of the United Democratic Front," (August, 1993), leaflet.

⁴²See Marx (1992), chps. 4-6; and Glenn Moss and Ingrid Obery, eds., *South African Review 3* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986).

⁴³Some academics writing on this period have contrasted the 'ideological' inclinations of groups such as the National Forum as opposed to the 'non-ideological' inclinations of the UDF. In my view, this is both analytically wrong and misdirected. Such an analysis assumes that ideology (most often defined as a coherent set of beliefs) is the exclusive preserve of those on the left or the right of the political and social spectrum, where those who steer a 'middle-course' (whatever label one wants to give them) are then seen as having no specific ideology. Such 'centrism', which most often seeks to find commonalities amongst division, is itself constitutive of an ideology. It

is no less a coherent set of beliefs that informs strategic decisions than any other 'ism. The fact that such 'centrism' borrows from other ideological constructs does not then make it a mere atomized collection of disparate influences.

For examples of the perspective mentioned see Marx (1992), chp.4.; Tom Lodge & Bill Nasson, *All, Here, And Now: Black Politics in South Africa in the 1980's* (Cape Town: David Philip Publishers and Ford Foundation, 1991), pp.127-140. Lodge extends this kind of perspective to the ANC/SACP. He states: "essentially the ANC is a movement of pragmatists, not ideologues...."[Lodge, "The Second Consultative Conference of the African National Congress," *South Africa International* 16, No.2 (October, 1985), p.95].

"Many major (white) South African capitalists were only too happy to provide financial assistance (e.g. Chris Ball - the South African head of British-based Barclays Bank). As previously mentioned, domestic capital had long realized that to save the 'free enterprise system' they would have to find ways to influence the 'struggle'. As long as they were fairly certain that the UDF, and later the ANC/SACP were open to the vision of a deracialized capitalism they knew they would be much better off pegging their colors to the 'national democratic' mast.

⁴⁵See ANC (pamphlet), "Circular to all ANC missions and Solidarity organizations," (Lusaka: 21 Nov. 1983). Such campaigns also helped raise the stature of the ANC/SACP internationally. The campaign for the release of Mandela became a central rallying point for anti-apartheid activity.

⁴⁶The ANC/SACP was eager to counter the perception that the organization was "a transient force having it's[sic] roots on foreign soil and drawing it's[sic] main support from forces outside our borders."

See ANC (booklet), *Clarion Call to all Opponents of Apartheid*, Address by Oliver Tambo to the Greater London Council, March 21, 1984 (Lusaka: ANC, 1984), p.9.

⁴⁷ANC (leaflet), "ANC NEC Statement," (Lusaka: March 16, 1984). This statement came on the very day of the signing of the Nkomati Accord between Mozambique and the apartheid state which robbed the MK of its best frontline base.

CHAPTER 5
THE POLITICS OF UNGOVERNABILITY: INSURRECTIONARY HOPES AND
STRATEGIC REALITIES (1985-1989)

...we call on all sections of our people to make the apartheid system more and more unworkable and the country less and less governable. At the same time we must work endlessly to strengthen all levels of mass and underground organization and to create the beginnings of popular power.¹

ANC NEC Statement (April, 1985).

As had been the case so many times in the history of struggle in South Africa, the initial spark for yet another uprising came from below. The UDF's first national campaigns, aimed at exposing the Tri-Cameral Parliament as an apartheid sham and opposing Botha's abrogation of executive powers, spurred the growth of new grassroots organizations. However, these political campaigns did not directly address the worsening material and social conditions which apartheid capitalism continued to engender.

People on the ground seemed determined to launch a frontal assault. On September 3, 1984 (the same day as the installation of Botha's Tri-Cameral Parliament) the townships in the Vaal Triangle near Johannesburg erupted.² Feeling the full brunt of the economic crisis and no longer willing to put up with local apartheid controls, residents took to the streets burning businesses and government buildings; setting up roadblocks and battling with police; and attacking municipal councilors. So began the most intense and sustained mass struggle in the history of South Africa.

What made the Vaal uprising so significant was the linkage that the residents made between local grievances and national political and economic change. It did not, unlike much earlier mass struggle, emanate from the confines of a national leadership intent on realizing specifically formulated political goals, but was the direct expression of grassroots politicization of local material and social grievances. Fed up with incessant rent hikes, exploitative living and labor conditions, inadequate education, and corrupt, state-appointed local councilors the Vaal residents directed their anger at what they saw as representative of apartheid capitalism.

It was partly the implicit anti-capitalist content of the Vaal uprising, and much of the subsequent nation-wide mass struggle, that gave the uprising a historically singular opportunity for a radically transformative politics.³ A strategy was needed that would build on the people's anger and militant activity; a strategy that organized and provided leadership to struggles that would be equally undermining of both the institutions and practice of political and economic oppression (i.e. apartheid and capitalism). To channel the 'people's' militancy into a narrow framework of anti-apartheidism would mean to deny the rich possibilities of that struggle to fundamentally challenge the foundation of people's oppression.

Taking into account the objective conditions already discussed in this study (inclusive of a highly politicized, urbanized, and proletarianized South African population), a strategy centered around internal, working class-led organization and struggle would potentially provide the strongest challenge to the power of apartheid capitalism. And yet the strategy and tactics of the ANC/SACP, while rhetorically strong on the leading role of the working class and a 'full transfer of power to the people', was constitutive of everything that militated against such an approach. What was present, was a strategy and tactics in

which the organizational locus was externalized; in which thousands of the best activists sat in far away military camps waiting to launch (or so they were told) an armed seizure of power; and which was undergirded by an ideological commitment that limited the struggles of the 'mass' base to a racially privileged 'first stage' of national liberation. What was needed by the Vaal residents and others engaging in a life and death struggle against the combined ravages of apartheid and capitalism was revolutionary organization and leadership; not surprisingly, it was to the ANC/SACP and the UDF that most people turned.

The Kabwe Conference

Although there is often a direct association made between the uprising that raged inside South Africa and the 2nd ANC Consultative Conference at Kabwe, Zambia (16-23 June, 1985), I would argue that the reasons lay elsewhere. Since the Angolan camp mutinies there had been intense pressure from the rank-and-file for a full conference of the ANC and the leadership had informally agreed to fulfill the requests before the internal events of late 1984. Additionally, top SACP leaders had been pushing for the opening up of the NEC to non-Africans, something that could only be decided at a full organizational conference. The fact that the Kabwe conference took place amidst the most intense mass struggle in the history of South Africa presented the ANC/SACP with a unique opportunity: to formulate a strategy and tactics which would provide the internal resistance with the direction and organization they needed. This had to be the main task if there was going to be any possibility of achieving what the ANC/SACP had for so long stated was their goal of struggle, the seizure of power.

As had been the case in the 1960's, the SACP held its own Congress before that of the combined ANC/SACP. Meeting in Moscow (December, 1984), the SACP pledged to build its

own presence internally (with special emphasis on the labor movement) and to push hard for the ANC NEC to have open membership, which in effect meant open to non-African members of the SACP itself.⁴ More importantly though, the SACP reiterated that a seizure of power was still the strategic goal of the national liberation struggle. In its statement on the Congress, the SACP Central Committee stated:

The revolutionary situation in our country is maturing...growing numbers among the exploited classes and the oppressed realize **that revolution is necessary and are prepared to die for it...**The aim of the SACP and of the revolutionary alliance headed by the ANC, the objective pursued by the workers and the oppressed masses of the country, is to topple the apartheid regime and **take power into their own hands** (my emphasis).⁵

If history was anything to go by, there would not be too many 'strategy and tactics' surprises at Kabwe.

A full accounting of the proceedings at Kabwe still remain somewhat clouded. Two participants have described it as being dominated by SACP members, ridden with ethnic rivalries, and characterized by anti-democratic voting procedures. From these accounts it would appear as though certain high-ranking officials, in particular MK leaders, utilized ethnic identification (the main divisions being Xhosa/Zulu/Tswana) as a means to pursue their respective power agendas, and that the Stuart Commission report (so named after James Stuart, a senior movement leader tasked with authoring the report) on the Angolan mutinies was never tabled for full discussion.⁶

As the first full conference since Morogoro, Kabwe was meant to give voice to those of the 1976 generation who now made up the majority of the externalized organization. However, from all available reports it seems as though the established ANC/SACP leadership and long-serving ANC officials dominated proceedings. One of the more contentious practices allowed at Kabwe was giving ex-officio officials

the right to vote as delegates.⁷ Much debate was taken up with the issue of NEC open membership, and despite some spirited opposition the motion was passed in favor. ANC President-General Tambo presented a list of candidates for the NEC as a 'guide' to selection, and as it turned out all members of the new NEC came from the list. The NEC was expanded to thirty members and all the non-Africans on the new body were SACP members.⁸ SACP hegemony was confirmed by the presence of only eight non-SACP members on the NEC.

On strategic matters the conference reaffirmed the Freedom Charter as the "ideological lodestar" of the ANC/SACP, rejected the idea of a negotiated settlement with the apartheid state, and confirmed the shift to a "people's war" perspective. Following the previous SACP formulations closely, the conference asserted that "victory" could only come through the "seizure of power."⁹ While this position was consistent with past ANC/SACP strategic formulations, it was no doubt given added impetus by the internal uprising. The only difference was that a 'seizure of power' would now not come about through a protracted and predominantly rural-based guerrilla war, but through the prosecution of a 'people's war'. In the words of the SACP mouthpiece *Umsebenzi*:

Our situation displays almost all the conditions for a violent revolution that does not have to mature from a guerrilla campaign...our conduct of 'people's war has to take into account...the ongoing uprisings which have elements of an insurrectionary revolt...insurrection is much more than a possibility at the very end of a protracted war. We have to merge the strategy of protracted war and the science and art of insurrection.¹⁰

The debate over the prosecution of 'people's war' had been taking place within ANC/SACP strategic circles since the early 1980's. However, with the onset of the internal uprising it was now married to the idea of insurrection brought about by the accumulative effects of rendering South Africa ungovernable. The idea of a 'people's war' was

premised on a strategic approach that the best way to both mobilize and activate the 'people' was to use the movement's armed forces (MK) and key internal activists to act as 'scholar/soldiers' in rural and urban communities. Instead of seeking to conduct classic guerrilla warfare by engaging the 'enemy' they would now seek to arm and train the 'people' in their communities. This strategy would hopefully give people the means to launch increasingly effective armed/mass resistance to the apartheid state; this was to culminate in an insurrectionary 'seizure of power'. As will be discussed later, the potential success of such a strategy rested on the degree to which the cadres of the ANC/SACP could build and sustain solid internal organizational structures. Such a goal had been asserted as central to previous strategy but had rarely gotten past the pages of conference resolutions and NEC statements.¹¹

The rejection of a negotiated settlement went hand-in-hand with the call for an insurrectionary 'people's war', just as it had when the vehicle for liberation was protracted guerrilla warfare. In the quasi-insurrectionary climate taking hold inside the country as well as within the ANC/SACP itself, it would have been virtually impossible for the organization to formally endorse any move towards incorporating negotiations. In this regard, the Kabwe decision represented a continuity with past pronouncements. The debate on the new approach to the prosecution of the war effort, was consummated with the reinstallation of the Politico-Military Council who were given the task of setting up Regional Politico-Military Councils (RPMC's) in order to implement the move to a 'people's war'. However, the committee set up to revise the strategy and tactics Kabwe report had still not completed their work by early 1989.¹²

As will become clear in further discussion, the ANC/SACP leadership had already begun preparing the ground for a possible turn to negotiations. Despite the strident calls for an insurrectionary 'seizure of power', the

leadership was holding off its bets. One leading ANC member has gone so far as to say that the Kabwe call for an insurrectionary seizure of power "was nonsense" and that the armed struggle (in whatever form) was always seen (by the leadership) as "a half-hearted thing;"¹³ a reminder of the burning contradiction that existed between rhetoric of the ANC/SACP leadership, and the practical struggle for liberation. After 24 years, the 'armed struggle' was as far away from seizing power as the movement leadership was from Johannesburg. The practical history and character of the ANC/SACP's leadership, combined with the structural barriers to the chosen strategy of liberation, make it extremely difficult to argue that this leadership wholly believed in what they were telling the 'people'. It was more than unfortunate that the ANC/SACP seemed to be succumbing to the dogma of its own slogans.¹⁴

The Kabwe conference has often been viewed as an example of the ANC/SACP's principled and strategic contribution and response to the internal mass struggles taking place.¹⁵ There can be little doubt that the rank and file delegates (mostly from MK) at Kabwe were committed to realizing an insurrectionary seizure of power. They had been the ones who had called for a full organizational conference in order to find ways to get back into South Africa and fight; insurrection would surely be well nigh impossible while most of the 'revolutionary combatants' were thousands of miles from their home border. And yet the conference symbolized something far more negative. It was the extent to which organizational and ideological power-plays by certain ANC/SACP leaders had an extremely negative impact; and that fell on the ability and capacity of the ANC/SACP, through the rank and file, to practically implement a strategy conducive to creating the opportunities and ultimate realization of genuine national liberation.

Internal Revolt:

The ripple effect of the Vaal uprising was impressive in its breadth and speed and it caught all the 'major players' (ANC/SACP, UDF, the apartheid state) by surprise.

Within weeks several parts of the country were literally on fire. Besides the industrial belt around Johannesburg there was intense activity in the Eastern and Western Cape regions, and to a lesser extent in the Northern Transvaal. Most of the civic associations and other groups which took up the struggle quickly affiliated with the UDF, if they did not already belong, but there were also active groups affiliated to the BCM tradition, such as the Azanian Students Movement. A brief scan of events during late 1984 and early 1985 testifies to the extent and depth of the uprising:

- A November call to a two-day general strike in the Transvaal, orchestrated by the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) and the Soweto Youth Congress was heeded by over a million workers (which included migrant hostel dwellers).
- A March stayaway called by the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Association (PEBCO) was backed by 90 percent of workers in the city.¹⁶
- The Cradock Residents' Association and its leader Matthew Goniwe succeeded in building a network of civic and youth organizations across the rural Eastern Cape during the months following the Vaal uprising, which effectively replaced apartheid authority in the respective black townships.

Besides the more organized resistance, thousands of youth joined the fray in pitched battles with police, often without any formal leadership or structure. Many were responding directly to the ANC/SACP's well-publicized call in early 1985 to make the townships and ultimately the country "ungovernable."¹⁷ Neither the ANC/SACP nor the UDF

were able to exercise much control or direction over the often spontaneous expressions of resistance from the grassroots.

While the UDF national structures tended to militate against direct grassroots involvement, the ANC/SACP (mainly through MK) had long relied on symbolism and armed propaganda to mobilize resistance. Once the youth had responded to the ANC/SACP's call for ungovernability it became even more difficult to develop organizational control and direction. By the middle of 1985, while the ANC/SACP were consulting at Kabwe, the UDF leadership was trying to play catch up. They admitted as much in their 1985 National General Council Report which stated: "In many areas, organizations trail behind the masses, thus making it more difficult for a disciplined mass action to take place."¹⁸

The ANC/SACP and UDF were not the only ones finding it difficult to cope with the militant resistance. Vacillating between harsh repression and introducing further reform, the apartheid state found itself in temporary disarray. For the first few months of the uprising the Botha government had allowed the continuing legal operation of the UDF and its affiliates, hoping that the resistance would burn itself out and that an increasing number of township dwellers would respond to its generally unpopular attempts at cooptation. By mid-1985 however, with the uprising showing no signs of abating, a partial state of emergency was promulgated on July 21st.¹⁹

One of the first victims of the state of emergency was the UDF's largest affiliate, the Congress of South African Students (COSAS); this organization was banned and many of its leaders were arrested. This was followed by the arrests and detention of many of the UDF's regional and national leadership, as well a show of force in the townships, in an attempt to stamp out grassroots resistance and organization. However, since much of the resistance had not been under the direct control or direction of national-level organizations,

the apartheid state's tactics failed to squelch grassroots opposition. People were bloodied but certainly not bowed. The apartheid state's vision of a pacified black populace was met with a rude introduction into the reality of militant black resistance. The ante was going to have to be raised.

While police and youths fought it out on the streets, the UDF began to encourage a change of tactics in an attempt to exert more control over local struggles. Arguing that there was a need to hit apartheid "where it hurts," the UDF leaders called for consumer boycotts against local white businesses. Although there ensued nationwide boycotts, the tactic met with differing degrees of success, with the major campaigns concentrated in the cities of Port Elizabeth, East London, and around the Witwatersrand region.²⁰

On the negative side though, many of these actions were marked by the use of coercive enforcement, criminal elements acting in the name of the UDF/ANC/SACP, and the development of an intolerance for those who advocated different tactics. This highlighted a major inadequacy of those who were ostensibly leading the mass struggles. Without well organized popular underground structures able to give direction, disciplined leadership, and effective armed support for legitimate resistance, much of the potential for realizing the stated goals of the uprising was squandered.

As in the past, the organized black working class showed why they were the leading element in the liberation struggle. Coming together in the newly-formed Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in November, 1985, they took their established industrial power directly into the political arena.²¹ Linking up with community and student groups and bringing the militancy of hundreds of thousands of workers, COSATU provided much needed cohesion and direction to the ongoing resistance. Not long after its formation COSATU leaders traveled to Lusaka to meet with the externalized ANC/SACP leadership, subsequently endorsing the

Freedom Charter and effectively allying COSATU with the ANC/SACP.

These developments indicated the dominant ideological and symbolic appeal of the ANC/SACP, and the growing politicization of the new union structures. It also reflected the apparent success of the SACP in recruiting leading unionists, a task the organization had set for the itself at the 1984 Congress.²² Although COSATU provided a certain degree of working class discipline and organizational direction to ongoing resistance (e.g. the 1987 miners strike), its overt alliance with the ANC/SACP/UDF meant that its efforts were bound up in the overall strategic path that was now dominated by a politics of ungovernability; and this, I would argue, was a negative development. It was not that a struggle to make the system ungovernable was in itself negative; it was rather that the underlying liberation strategy of the ANC/SACP made a politics of ungovernability (under the structural conditions) an 'unguided missile' politics (i.e. little cohesion, direction, or prefigured target).

A third of the way into 1986 the ANC/SACP and its UDF internal allies were riding high on the wave of ungovernability. With the added strength of COSATU there reigned an attitude of supreme confidence that liberation, or as the nationwide slogan proclaimed, 'people's power', was just around the corner. Since the uprising had taken hold, the notion of 'people's power' had surfaced as the defining goal and constitutive element of resistance. 'People's power' was to be achieved in conjunction with the prosecution of a 'people's war'. The 'people's war' would provide the 'people' with the organizational and military means to achieve 'people's power'. The degree to which the confidence of movement strategists informed the extent of 'people's power' is exemplified by the following definition:

Control over every aspect of our lives - at work;
at school; where we live; over the structures of

national and local government; over the army, police, courts, and prisons; the media; the church; financial institutions and the economy as a whole.²³

The belief that the apartheid state was about to collapse and be replaced by organs of people's power was pushed by leaders and taken up by the 'masses'. UDF leader Mohammed Valli confidently declared in March, 1986 that the UDF could withstand "extreme repression" and "dictate the nature and pace of events in our country."²⁴ In a widely reported speech Winnie Mandela (wife of Nelson Mandela and by now a national and international political figure), exhibiting a more crude version of the confidence that gripped township youths, stated that "with our necklaces and our little boxes of matches, we shall liberate this country."²⁵ In the townships and some rural areas slogans such as 'liberation before education', and 'people's justice' clearly expressed the belief amongst many people at the grassroots, in particular the youth, that they were well on the way to replacing the apartheid state.

The notion of 'people's power' and the idea that an insurrectionary implementation of 'dual power' (parallel institutions controlled by the 'people') was on the verge of delivering national liberation, confused hope with reality. Although resistance had certainly made substantial inroads into apartheid power in the townships and to a lesser degree in some rural areas, the national authority and coercive power of the apartheid state was nowhere near being threatened with disintegration. The key ingredients for a potentially insurrectionist seizure of power in the South African context, nationally consolidated, armed, and organized organs of people's power, were absent. As it stood, the apartheid state and its armed component, although facing a serious economic crisis and a political crisis of legitimacy, had not been fundamentally undermined.

This is not meant to imply that the activities of the numerous civic organizations (especially those based in

urban townships), undertaken as they were within the general parameters of the call for ungovernability, did not have substantive impact on both township dwellers and the apartheid state. As Mzwanele Mayekiso, former President of the Alexandra Civic Organization argues, the most important contribution of this period and of the activities of the civics was the growing confidence amongst the people that they had "to be involved in making their own future."²⁶ This sense of empowerment derived from grassroots activity did not exactly make a good fit with an ANC/SACP leadership determined to make (control) their own future; the main problem was that the leaders "their" had already substituted for the "their" of the 'people'. While the possibilities of an insurrectionary seizure of state power were fundamentally undermined by the strategic vision and practice of an externalized liberation movement, local struggles laid the foundation for further grassroots empowerment and a vision of transformation centered around materially located democratic demands.

The euphoria that had gripped the ANC/SACP/UDF leaders and their followers after the lifting of the first state of emergency in early March was short-lived. On June 12, 1986 Botha announced a nationwide state of emergency that gave virtual control of the country to the military supremos (securocrats) in his cabinet. Flush with their successful counter-revolutionary regional activities and persuasively arguing that the previous state strategies had now run their course, the securocrats were given free rein to implement their version of a 'total strategy'. Concentrated in the professional ranks of the SADF and generally seeing the police force as ill-educated and crude operators, these securocrats believed that their more sophisticated counter-revolutionary tactics would be better able to maintain 'law and order' while taking the wind out of the sails of the uprising.²⁷

Within weeks of the state of emergency announcement, the state securocrats had deployed thousands of SADF troops in the townships, drastically stepped-up arrests and detentions, and instituted harsh censorship regulations on press coverage.²⁸ Operating within a militarized National Security Management System which created a web of regional and sub-regional security committees, and with an executive controlled State Security Council providing political muscle, the securocrats set about the task of implementing their 'low-intensity warfare' strategy. As part of this strategy the securocrats sought to prioritize security considerations as a means to open space for further reform measures, reversing the previous situation where failed reforms had been followed by limited repression. In order to create the maximum space for the success of the new strategy several tactics were adopted:

- to 'decapitate' the national and local leadership of the ANC/SACP/UDF through mass arrest, indefinite detention, and where deemed necessary through assassination/murder. Successful regional counter-revolutionary efforts would continue;
- to divide organized resistance in the townships along ethnic, class, and ideological lines;
- to recruit and/or co-opt sections of the black populace to act as vigilante enforcers of the status quo;
- to win the 'hearts and minds' of the black population by emphasizing selective redistribution of social services and increased opportunities for social advancement, albeit within the parameters of macro-apartheid.²⁹

By the end of the year several thousand people had been arrested, the majority of whom were community activists and students; many were under the age of eighteen. Battles raged in many townships and in the rural areas of Natal, not only between apartheid security forces and ANC/SACP/UDF

supporters, but increasingly between these supporters and other blacks representing state-sponsored vigilantism and competing political groups such as Gatsha Buthelezi's Inkata movement.³⁰

In yet another attempt to gather their rapidly disintegrating forces and give national direction to a situation that verged on anarchy, the UDF launched two nationwide campaigns in late 1986 and early 1987. Yet both the 'Christmas Against the Emergency Campaign' and the 'Unban the ANC' campaign met with limited organizational success and certainly did little to turn the tide that was now flowing heavily against the two-year old uprising.³¹ As one observer noted at the time, "...the UDF's reliance on mobilization and protest often conflicts with organizational requirements. Resources which could be devoted to organization have been dissipated in attempts to mobilize dramatic ...campaigns."³² The UDF was having great difficulty living up to the earlier claims of its leaders.

As the 'total strategy' of the securocrats took its physical and psychological toll, serious divisions both within resistance circles and in the black urban population began to appear. Many township residents were increasingly put off by the coercive enforcement of boycotts and the often indiscriminate use of 'people's justice' by township youth, commonly referred to as 'comtsotsis'³³, acting in the name of the ANC/SACP/UDF. Likewise, many union members expressed their opposition to the mobilization strategies of many UDF activists and the increasingly anti-democratic practices used to ensure their success. Even making these criticisms was often seen as betrayal of the symbols of the 'struggle'. As one COSATU member said, "they say you are against Mandela and nobody wants to be accused of that."³⁴

There were also battles between national UDF affiliates such as the National Education Coordinating Committee (NECC) and local student bodies over the efficacy of continuing school boycotts. One other example of growing intolerance

and division was the internecine battles waged between UDF supporters and those affiliated with AZAPO. Increasingly, UDF leaders sought to project a unified opposition under the charterist banner, giving at least indirect support to the activities of their youthful firebrands.³⁵ Although many leaders in the UDF argued that the 'objective conditions' resulting from the state's counter-revolutionary strategies were to blame for these divisions, there was a tendency to underplay the responsibility of the UDF's strategies themselves.³⁶

Just when there was the greatest need for building an effective underground to cope with the heavy repression and give organization and direction, the UDF responded by restructuring their national bureaucracy and embarking on a campaign to win the hearts and minds of the white populace and 'liberal' capital.³⁷ There followed campaigns such as the 'Friends of the UDF' which was launched at Johannesburg's plush hotel, and conferences with white liberal organizations such as veteran opposition politician Frederick Van Zyl Slabbert's Institute for Democratic Alternatives in South Africa (IDASA).³⁸ The UDF leadership had certainly changed their tune since their 1985 assessment of Van Zyl Slabbert's (a leading 'liberal' member of the Progressive Federal Party) calls for negotiation. In the first issue of the UDF journal *Isizwe*, the leadership had declared that Van Zyl Slabbert's attempts at seeking "closed-door talks" were only "another attempt to keep the broad mass of South Africans off the political stage." It went on to say that if there was any lesson to be learned it was that "you cannot negotiate 'reforms' over the heads of the people."³⁹

While Van Zyl Slabbert and other political representatives of domestic capital might have been more willing to accept the legitimacy of the UDF, and by association the ANC/SACP, than in 1985, the fact that the UDF leadership was now focusing substantial attention and

organizational energy on wooing white capital and political liberals bore testimony to the defeat of any genuine notion of an insurrectionary implementation of 'people's power'.

The UDF's stated tactics in dealing with domestic capital were designed to "maintain the division" between "sections of capital and the National Party" so as to "neutralize sections of the enemy camp or its allies and thus dislocate their attempts at unity."⁴⁰ This was directly in line with the ANC/SACP tactic of isolating the apartheid regime by bringing together the broadest anti-apartheid front possible. Although the next chapter will discuss this tactic more fully, it is worth pointing out here that such an approach (in following the two-stage theory of revolution) allowed for a conceptual division between apartheid and capitalism. The result of this 'tactic' was to lead to a strategic alliance with sections of capital against the apartheid state.

Indeed, the question arises as to the strategic conceptualization of the resistance by certain UDF leaders from the very beginning. UDF co-president Albertina Sisulu's statement that "leaders try to stop uprisings...it is the government that wants uprisings,"⁴¹ raises serious questions as to where the logic of national UDF strategy led. The heroic, if sometimes unguided and unorganized, struggles waged by those who answered the call to 'arms' were certainly not carried out to achieve a negotiated settlement for a deracialized capitalism. As one leading community activist put it; "we believed we were fighting not just for nationalism, but for socialism."⁴²

However much the national structures of the UDF were prepared to accept a negotiated solution, Botha and his securocrats were in no mood for such accommodation. Having already dashed the insurrectionary hopes of the ANC/SACP/UDF, they consummated their 'victory' by effectively banning the UDF in February, 1988. Much of their attention was once again focused on the regional and

international arenas where they were facing severe military and economic challenges. Ironically, it was in these arenas where Botha and his securocrats were to face their Waterloo.

The Logic of External Management

Today in many parts of the country, government policy is driving people into resistance to a stage where they are clamoring for action. Local leaders cannot lag behind the people, or they will cease to be leaders and the blind forces of destruction and revenge will take over. But local action must always be principled, in accordance with the established policy and general direction of the national leadership. No desperation, no adventurism, but firm, resolute and revolutionary action. That should be the watchword of the oppressed people and their leaders in the difficult days ahead.⁴³

Central Committee - SACP (1963)

Even though the above directives were given in 1963 they were certainly still relevant for the ANC/SACP of the 1980's. After the Kabwe conference the ANC/SACP was presented with a situation which, more than ever, called for 'resolute and revolutionary action' and leadership. There could be no doubt that the stature and symbols of the externalized movement were the guiding lights of the vast majority of those who took up the ANC/SACP call to make South Africa 'ungovernable'. In this regard, the ANC/SACP was greatly aided by vitriolic apartheid propaganda directed at the 'communist terrorists', and the association of virtually any resistance activity with the externalized movement. Although the UDF was the legal organizational structure to which they were attached, the internal 'broad mass' looked to the ANC/SACP and its armed wing MK to lead them, and provide them with the means to realize the vision of genuine 'people's power'. How did the ANC/SACP respond?

The first and most obvious strategic response of the ANC/SACP was to issue the call for ungovernability. Sensing the insurrectionary potential of the increasingly militant

activities of the black populace, the ANC/SACP strategists provided a powerful rallying call to action. They encouraged the youth and other militants to see themselves as part of MK, taking the armed struggle into the township streets and against local manifestations of apartheid. Senior ANC/SACP strategists saw in this call a way to give 'strategic purpose' to internal formations and to unify disparate struggles around a vision of 'people's power'. According to NEC member and former head of the ANC Department of Political Education Raymond Suttner, "the call to make South Africa ungovernable was the correct strategic insight given the objective conditions at the time."⁴⁴ Similarly, ANC NEC and SACP Central Committee member Jeremy Cronin argues:

The weakness of the internal groupings (their strength lay in the political space which they created), was that they fly in a million different directions. This is why you need a clear political strategy and a unified political formation which surgically directs towards key tasks - this is what the ANC successfully did during the 1980's (e.g. the call for ungovernability, the call to a people's war) - it emerged as hegemonic and unifying and gave strategic purpose to the UDF and COSATU-type structures.⁴⁵

However, there is a difference between identifying key tasks through a clear political strategy and implementing the necessary foundations to support and direct subsequent action. As the April, 1985 NEC statement had noted, for such strategic calls to have long-term effect there has to be a unified and disciplined underground organization capable of providing such support and direction. The real 'key task', given the 'objective conditions', was to combine armed and mass struggles under the political leadership and strategic organization of an internal underground. As much as the ANC/SACP provided a symbolic and organizational focal point for internal resistance, there could be no real hope for a 'seizure of power' through accumulative 'people's power' as

long as that focal point remained predominantly externalized.

During the height of the internal resistance some ANC/SACP strategists, caught up in the insurrectionary mood, pushed the idea that 'people's organs of power', provided the basis of a 'dual power'. It was posited that this 'dual power' (competing institutions of governance) was a direct and immediate challenge to the viability of the apartheid state.⁴⁶ While there were definitely numerous examples of internal civic structures that successfully challenged apartheid authorities and control, such as the Alexandra Civic Organization (in Alexandra township on the outskirts of Johannesburg), these were mainly at the local level.

As previously noted, conceptualizations of 'dual power' at the national level assumed the imminent or near-term collapse of the administrative and coercive power of the apartheid state. Such a perspective was given added impetus by the belief, as expressed by the NEC, that "a long-lasting work stoppage, backed by our oppressed communities and supported by armed activity, can break the backbone of the apartheid system and bring the regime to its knees."⁴⁷

These kinds of ANC/SACP strategic and tactical projections provided the background for the practical activities and expectations of the internal resistance. The extent of the externalized ANC/SACP and MK's almost unquestioned moral authority and symbolic power revealed itself in the content and character of internal resistance: the youth mimicked armed MK combatants in their one-sided battles with the SADF, 'armed' in most cases with stones, molotov cocktails, and wooden AK-47 replicas; workers embarked on stoppages, students refused 'apartheid-controlled' schooling, and communities attacked the 'representatives' of apartheid; at every rally, demonstration, and funeral the banners and symbols of the ANC/SACP dominated, especially anything associated with Mandela; and the Freedom Charter became the struggle

'bible', its vaguely worded content allowing myriad interpretations and allegiances.

If all of this gave credence to the ANC/SACP's claim to be the 'sole legitimate representative' of the 'oppressed', then it likewise confirmed that the 'oppressed' expected that the ANC/SACP would lead them to the promised 'seizure of power' land. While some observers might dispute this perspective it is extremely difficult, given the practical activity of those 'on the ground', to make the argument that the broad mass was struggling for a negotiated liberation. Such a view seemed to be the preserve of the ANC/SACP leadership. As Oliver Tambo stated at the height of the uprising, the ANC/SACP's main objective was not "a military victory but to force Pretoria to the negotiating table."⁴⁸

Whatever differences there were over the 'main objective' between ANC/SACP leadership, rank-and-file, and their mass base, the way in which the armed struggle continued to be prosecuted virtually ensured there would be no insurrectionary seizure of power. The theoretical position adopted by ANC/SACP strategists posited that the armed struggle must link up with grassroots mass struggles in order to create the conditions for a 'people's war'. As the SACP had put it, to "transform 'simple' mass uprisings into armed uprisings."⁴⁹ Despite the substantial increase in the number of MK attacks during the uprising⁵⁰, they continued to be overwhelmingly confined to sabotage operations. As such, the development of autonomous internal armed formations based amongst the general populace, and linked with grassroots structures was minimal. As one student activist in the Eastern Cape said, there was "never systematic integration of the mass movement into the armed struggle."⁵¹

The effectiveness of MK was not helped by organizational feuding and personal rivalries amongst its leaders, and the lack of internal political and military leadership capable of giving direction and providing

supplies.⁵² All of this combined to ensure no basic change in the practical results of armed activity despite stated strategic goals. There was little indication that the strategic switch from protracted guerrilla warfare to insurrectionary people's war had yielded the desired results. The increased activities of MK did have a significant psychological impact on the black populace that gave the ANC/SACP an invaluable mobilizing tool, and these activities certainly contributed to the growing problems of the apartheid state. However, as long as an externalized ANC/SACP leadership and strategy and tactics guided MK practice, the scope for developing the conditions for an armed seizure of power were extremely limited.

Whether or not the armed struggle was seen as a pressure tactic for eventual negotiation, or as a way of realizing an armed seizure of power, the externalized ANC/SACP was, more than ever, reliant on favorable international conditions to maintain a viable military option. In this regard, events in the international arena during the late 1980's increasingly narrowed the scope for the externally-based activities of MK, and set the scene for a new round of accommodation.

Although no one could know it at the time, the coming to power in the USSR of Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985 signaled a sea change in global power relations and consequently in the ANC/SACP's liberation struggle. Within a few months of taking the helm, Gorbachev had made it clear that he was out to force radical changes in Soviet domestic policy and foreign relations.⁵³ Stressing the desire for the USSR to free itself from a debilitating Cold War mentality, Gorbachev needed to reach agreement with the United States on arms reductions in order to implement the domestic reforms he so desperately sought. As part of this plan Gorbachev and United States President Reagan met in Iceland in October, 1986 agreeing, among other things, to try and

halt military intervention and assistance to favored allies in the 'third world'.

For the ANC/SACP, who had come to rely heavily on the Soviets and East Germans for everything from printing journals to military hardware⁵⁴, this development held out three potential effects: to drastically reduce their ability to wage an externalized armed struggle; to hasten the implementation of their macro-strategy of negotiations; or to force the ANC/SACP to fully commit itself to an internally-based 'people's war'. The last option was a remote possibility, given previously established practice and the logic of the officially chosen national liberation strategy.

It was no surprise that the SACP formally welcomed the Gorbachev changes, since they had consistently supported any line from Moscow.⁵⁵ Yet, what even the SACP could not foresee was the impact of these changes on Southern Africa. Beginning in late 1987 Angolan government troops launched a large-scale offensive against UNITA. As it had done so many times in the past, the apartheid state came to UNITA's rescue, and there ensued a brief military standoff. However, the apartheid securocrats who had become increasingly confident of their military capabilities, decided to push ahead and attempt to make southern Angola a permanent UNITA fief. In the process they hoped to ensure their hold over Namibia and consolidate their political supremacy at home.⁵⁶

The military campaign of the SADF/UNITA culminated in what is now known as the battle of Cuito Cuanavale. After several months of intense fighting between the SADF/UNITA and Angolan government troops backed by their Cuban allies around the strategic southern Angolan town of Cuito Cuanavale, the SADF/UNITA forces retreated, having failed to take the town.⁵⁷ Although there continued to be a military standoff along the Angolan-Namibian border it soon became obvious that the United States and the USSR wanted an end to the fighting.

Immediately following the battle, the United States and the USSR began to hold secret high-level meetings involving their respective Southern Africa officials, Chester Crocker and Anatoly Adamishin.⁵⁸ These led to a series of further meetings between the Angolans, Cubans, and apartheid South Africa over the possibilities of a signed agreement which would guarantee simultaneous withdrawal of Cuban and South African troops from Angola and Namibia respectively. Under intense pressure from the United States and USSR the sides cut a deal in December, 1988 in New York. The outcome had important repercussions for all 'players' in the region.

The New York agreement signaled a serious political setback for Botha and his securocrats. Not only did the Angolan setback cost them dearly in terms of their Afrikaner political base⁵⁹, but their dominance of the ruling National Party was more than ever under attack from more 'moderate' elements. Although Botha and his securocrats had succeeded in crushing the internal uprising and seriously disrupting the ANC/SACP's attempts at conducting external guerrilla warfare, they had never wholly grasped the political and economic realities of apartheid capitalism. Continually believing that they could retain absolute white political dominance while gradually increasing economic opportunities for the black majority, the Botha government was blind to the need for pre-emptive political accommodation that might secure a truncated white political role but which would preserve capitalism. Even though no one could firmly predict what was going to happen, the 'moderates' that were now knocking on the door of National Party power could not but face the reality that had escaped Mr. Botha and his predecessors.⁶⁰

For the ANC/SACP the deal meant closing down all of its bases in Angola. Already far away from their country, MK cadres would now have to retreat even further to places like Tanzania, Zambia and Uganda. The armed struggle had come full circle. The dislocation of thousands of MK cadres

resulted in serious problems for the ANC/SACP. As might have been expected there was widespread demoralization within MK, no doubt linked to reports that the organization's security department, Mbokodo, was running amok once again.⁶¹ In addition, the New York agreement made it clear that the USSR was no longer willing to support the armed struggle of the ANC/SACP.⁶²

These developments represented more than just a severe body blow to the hopes of MK rank-and-file and movement militants. They signaled the consummated logic of the ANC/SACP's externally based struggle for national liberation. Having consistently adopted a theory and strategy that resulted in an externally-driven armed struggle whose *raison d'être* was the seizure of power, and whose practice mitigated against the development of a politically organized and armed internal underground, the ANC/SACP was caught out.

Even though the ANC/SACP had instigated a specific plan, Operation Vula⁶³, to build up the internal underground in the late 1980's, the activities already underway on the international and domestic scenes made it extremely likely that the ANC/SACP would choose the route which seemed only logical - accommodative negotiation.

The decade of the 1980's, even with all its liberation struggle permutations, had seen the ANC/SACP achieve a hegemonic position as representative of the majority of South Africans both inside the country and internationally. However, the strategic character of the ANC/SACP's approach to armed struggle and the ongoing setbacks (both internal and international) affecting its ability to pose a serious military threat to the apartheid regime, had served to further strengthen an increasingly overt politics of accommodation throughout the 1980's. As a result, it was the terrain of international politics (and capital) that the ANC/SACP increasingly turned to during the 1980's for the

realization of its stated goal of national liberation for the 'transfer of power to the people'.

NOTES

¹ANC (pamphlet), "The Future is Within Our Grasp," Statement of the National Executive Committee of the ANC (Lusaka: ANC, April 25, 1985), p.2.

²The Vaal triangle is so called for a cluster of townships to the east of Johannesburg, which is the center of the Transvaal province. Some of the larger townships include Sebokeng, Thokoza, and Kathlehong. The Vaal triangle had a heavy concentration of industrial workers and unemployed shack dwellers situated in the industrial heartland of South Africa. As will be discussed in chapter seven, the Vaal has remained one of the most radicalized urban areas and has been the site of much of the violence since the unbanning of the ANC/SACP.

³While many academic observers and ANC/SACP leaders have acknowledged the anti-capitalist sentiment embodied in the uprising there seems to be an over-concentration on the anti-apartheid content of the uprising. While the anti-apartheid content was no doubt the most visible expression of the mass struggles (exemplified by attacks on the physical manifestations of apartheid rule), it was intricately bound up with an anti-capitalist sentiment. The fact that this sentiment was not particularly well developed or expressed by the grassroots does not make it any less important, but all the more imperative that it be given organizational and strategic content. See Marx (1992), pp.67-72; and Tom Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa since 1945* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1985), chps.4-5.

⁴Ellis & Sechaba (1992), pp.145-147. At the Congress most of the same leadership was retained, with Joe Slovo as General-Secretary. Interestingly, Thabo Mbeki (head of the ANC International Affairs Department) was elected to the Politburo, a significant development since Mbeki was universally seen as a 'moderate' who favored a negotiated settlement to the struggle. To the extent that his election signified similar thinking among sections of the SACP leadership remains a contentious issue, but it would seem that this was partly the case (see discussion on ANC/SACP negotiations stance in chp.6).

⁵In *The African Communist*, (2nd Quarter, 1985), p.9.

⁶These two accounts by participants come from Tsepo Sechaba [Ellis & Sechaba (1992), pp.149-151] and Mkatashingo [Letter to the Editors,

"The ANC Conference: From Kabwe to Johannesburg," *Searchlight South Africa*, No.6 (January, 1991), pp.91-92]. Both of the 'names' used are pen names, an indication of the sensitive nature of revealing such information. To this day access to the formal documents of the Kabwe conference is virtually impossible. Hopefully this will change in the near-future.

Tom Lodge's article on the conference gives an entirely different picture of a democratically rejuvenated ANC, more responsive than ever to its rank-and-file/mass base and thus less susceptible to external influences. It must be noted though, that at the time he wrote the article the information available would have come directly from ANC administration sources. See Lodge (1985), pp.89-90.

⁷See the two participants accounts mentioned in previous endnote. The information presented on the conference, where not specifically noted otherwise, comes from these two accounts.

⁸Amongst others, these included Joe Slovo, Mac Maharaj, James Stuart, and Aziz Pahad.

⁹Lodge (1985) p.82.

¹⁰In "Does Insurrection Need People's War?," *Umsebenzi* 2, No.1 (1986), p.3.

¹¹It needs to be reiterated that the substantial 'objective conditions' barriers cannot wholly account for the consistent failure, since 1963, to build an effective internal organizational underground. The ANC/SACP's practical implementation of strategy and tactics virtually precluded building such internal structures. Although this goal was repeated time and again in ANC/SACP statements and publications the practice which was subsequently followed, emanating and directed as it was from an external base, had the effect of appending the internal dynamic to the external. By doing so, the ANC/SACP substantially undercut the possibilities of ever achieving the one element central to a successful 'seizure of power'.

For interpretations of the Kabwe deliberations on negotiations see Lodge (1985), p.82; and Willie Esterhuyse "The ANC and Negotiations," chap. in, *The ANC and its Leaders* (Cape Town: Tafelburg, 1990), pp.124-141.

¹²Barrell (1990), p.59. There seems to be no official record of the committee ever completing its work. This is not surprising since the 1989 Harare Declaration of the ANC/SACP formally endorsed a negotiated settlement. Mkatashingo (1991) claims that there was little discussion on the strategy and tactics report at the Kabwe conference.

¹³Ben Turok, interview with author, October 1992.

¹⁴Jeremy Cronin, member of the SACP Central Committee and leading SACP intellectual has blamed the tendency to be "dogmatic about our slogans," on "bad external habits" (Jeremy Cronin, interview with author, October, 1992).

¹⁵For examples of such perspectives see Lodge (1985); and Meli (1988).

¹⁶Lodge & Nasson (1991), p.73.

¹⁷Although this call is recognized as gaining its full impact with the ANC NEC's statement of 8 January, 1985, Oliver Tambo had provided an earlier indication of the strategic inclinations of the ANC/SACP. In an address entitled "Liberation is in Sight" Tambo stated:

We must begin to use our accumulated strength to destroy the organs of government of the apartheid regime. We have to undermine and weaken its control over us, exactly by frustrating its attempts to control us...rendering the enemy's instruments of authority unworkable...creating conditions in which the country becomes increasingly ungovernable.

As quoted in *The African Communist* (2nd Quarter, 1984), p.26.

¹⁸United Democratic Front, National General Council Report (Johannesburg, 1985) as cited in Lodge & Nasson (1991), p.76.

¹⁹At this stage the state of emergency was limited to the Witwatersrand, and large parts of the Eastern and Western Cape. It gave the security forces effective martial law powers. Under the state of emergency they were able to conduct wide-scale arrests and detention without explanation, enforce curfews, and conduct search and seizure exercises at will.

²⁰The consumer boycotts were particularly successful in the Eastern Cape, where there was an intricate network of street committees to popularize calls and where the urban population was geographically much more concentrated than in other urban centers of the country. For specific information on the boycott movement see Lodge & Nasson (1991), pp. 79-83.

²¹COSATU brought together unions that had been in FOSATU, several independent unions and the huge National Union of Mineworkers, formerly affiliated to CUSA. By doing so, much of the division that had been part of the 'charterist-workerist' debate was temporarily buried. However, once COSATU had formally endorsed the Freedom Charter and allied itself with the ANC/SACP, and as state repression took its toll, the debate was to resurface with even greater vengeance.

For a sympathetic history of COSATU and its early days see Jeremy Baskin, *Striking Back: A History of the Congress of South African Trade Unions* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1991).

²²It seemed only natural that the SACP would want to recruit working class leaders and union members since they claimed to be the vanguard representatives of the working class. However, there was still a great deal of antipathy among many workers and worker leaders towards the SACP and their two-stage national democratic revolution strategy. The SACP was seen as having suspect democratic credentials, and its

formulations seen as diluting specific working class concerns in its alliance with the ANC, and of placing the struggle for socialism on the back burner. The SACP itself continued to argue that "workerism" was necessarily "reformist" and lashed out at "workerists" who mooted the idea of forming a specifically worker's party as not dedicated to the "overthrow of capitalism." [See SACP, "The Reformist Role of Workerism," *Umsebenzi* 2, No.1 (1986), p.7]. Later events would reveal that it was the SACP who would face charges of being 'reformist'.

According to labor historian Baruch Hirson many of the new SACP recruits from COSATU were told that the SACP was in the process of reforming itself and would turn more of its attention and organizational energy to specifically working class politics. [Baruch Hirson, interview with author, October 1992]. Whatever the case might have been, the fact remained that the SACP was generally seen as the only viable organization capable of giving political content to working class concerns.

For an extended discussion on the relationship between the SACP and working class politics see Fine & Davis (1990), chp.11.

²¹Mike Morris, "Redistributive Reform," *Indicator SA* (Issue focus, n.d.), p.108. Also see Steven Friedman, "The Struggle Within the Struggle: South African Resistance Strategies," *Transformation*, No.3, (1987), pp.58-70.

²²In *The Weekly Mail*, 14 March, 1986.

²³The 'necklace' was the method used by many ANC/SACP/UDF aligned township dwellers to 'deal' with those they considered enemies of the 'struggle'. It consisted of placing an empty tire around the victim's neck, filling it with gasoline and then setting it alight.

Although Winnie Mandela was not an official leader of the UDF, her stature as a tireless resistor of apartheid and wife of Nelson Mandela, gave her statements added weight and importance. Much of the UDF leadership condemned her statement, but in reality all she was doing was giving verbal expression to the logic of a strategy of ungovernability.

²⁴See Mzwanele Mayekiso, "The Legacy of 'Ungovernability'," in *Southern African Review of Books* 5, No.6 (November/December, 1993), pp. 24-27. For an opposing perspectives on civic and community struggles see Jeremy Seekings, "Civic Organization in South African townships," in Glenn Moss and Ingrid Obery eds., *South African Review Six* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1992), pp.216-238.

²⁵In retrospect it is hard to figure out why the ANC/SACP/UDF leaders virtually ignored the military might of the SADF, which had not been fully utilized internally. As previously argued, one of the most important elements in attaining a revolutionary situation is erosion of the loyalty and cohesion of the enemy's armed forces. Even though there had been a few defections and some dissatisfaction within the SADF, the core of its all-white power-base remained solidly intact and it possessed no shortage of military hardware with which to engage internal resistance. Since the activities of MK were mostly designed for psychological effect and presented the SADF with minor military

pressures, the ANC/SACP were well aware that its coercive power had yet to be tested internally.

¹⁸Before June 1986, international media coverage of the uprising, particularly television, had succeeded in bringing the images of apartheid South Africa to the attention of millions world-wide. Anti-apartheid movements in Europe and the United States were at their height as were international sanctions against the apartheid state. The securocrats understood that by taking away this negative media exposure, they would deprive the externalized ANC/SACP and their international anti-apartheid allies of an important mobilizing weapon. They could not know how successful this tactic would be.

¹⁹For two good discussions of the specific characteristics of this strategy see Morris, "Redistributive Reform" (n.d.); and Mark Swilling, "The Big Chill: From Reform to Counter-Revolution," *Indicator SA* (Issue Focus, n.d.).

²⁰The apartheid authorities were greatly aided in their task of recruitment and cooptation by the increasingly intolerant and anti-democratic behavior of ANC/SACP/UDF-aligned youth. For example in the squatter settlement of Crossroads (a rambling black 'township' outside of Cape Town) the 'witdoeke' (white headband) vigilantes who razed much of the settlement and attacked the 'comrades' (young ANC/SACP/UDF supporters), were not without their silent supporters among some of the residents (particularly the elderly) who were unhappy with the coercive tactics used by the comrades.

In the case of Inkata and its leader Gatsha Buthelezi, the state was able to manipulate conflict by turning Inkata into a ethnically based surrogate which ostensibly sought to combat the 'socialism' of the ANC/SACP/UDF and preserve 'Zulu culture' through appeals to rural ethnic identity. For a comprehensive treatment of Buthelezi and his Inkata movement see Mzala, *Gatsha Buthelezi: Chief with a Double Agenda* (London: Zed Press, 1987).

²¹The 'unban the ANC' campaign consisted largely of full-page newspaper advertisements taken out by the UDF national leadership; these cost tens of thousands of rands.

²²Friedman (1987), p.63.

²³The term derived its meaning from combining the words comrade and tsotsi (meaning criminal).

²⁴As cited in Friedman (1987), p.67.

²⁵Charges later surfaced that sections of the UDF regional and national leadership, particularly members of the UDF affiliated Natal Indian Congress (NIC) had formed a 'cabal' to enforce their particular perspectives and strategic line which, it was claimed, came from 'individuals in exile' [See "I joined the NIC and my eyes were opened...", *Work in Progress*, No.75 (June, 1991), pp. 30-31].

³⁶For example, Saleem Mowzer, who sat on the national executive of the NEEC, has explained the inability of the ANC/SACP/UDF to build a cohesive underground as the direct result of the objective conditions present during the mid-late 80s [Saleem Mowzer, interview with author, May 1991].

³⁷Since the 1985 securocrat crackdown South African domestic capital had effectively split into two camps. There was the Afrikaner-dominated sections of capital which more-or-less supported the Botha government (and subsequently benefited), and the predominantly English-speaking section of capital that continued to pursue a negotiated settlement designed to implement a deracialized capitalism.

³⁸Lodge (1987), p.6. Lodge endorses such tactics as a means to garner white support in a "broad front around the call for negotiation."

³⁹UDF, "Convention Alliance," *Isizwe 1*, No.1 (November, 1985), p.20-21.

⁴⁰Ibid., p.15.

⁴¹As quoted in Marx (1992), p.135.

⁴²Mzwanele Mayekiso, interview with author, October 1991. Mayekiso was a leading community organizer in the Johannesburg township of Alexandra and later President of the Alexandra Civic Organization.

⁴³SACP, "Statement of the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party," *The African Communist* (London: April/June, 1963), pp.3-18.

⁴⁴Raymond Suttner, interview with author, November 1992.

⁴⁵Jeremy Cronin, interview with author, October 1992.

⁴⁶See Alex Mashinini, "Dual power and the creation of people's committees," *Sechaba* (April, 1986); and Mzala, "Building people's war," *Sechaba* (September, 1986).

As will become clear in the discussion of ANC/SACP international activity in the next chapter, there were many in the leadership circles who never shared the insurrectionary perspectives of their comrades. However, the activities and pronouncements of this group were never part of ANC/SACP internal propaganda. As far as the people fighting it out on the township streets were concerned, the ANC/SACP was completely committed to a 'seizure of power', not some vague notion of a negotiated sharing of power.

⁴⁷ANC (1985), p.2. This call ignores the substantial power enjoyed by the apartheid state. As had been shown in the past, the state's administrative and coercive capacities were not seriously affected by work stoppages, whose effects were most felt by domestic capital. Thus, if such a call were to have any hope of bringing 'the regime to its

knees' the armed component would of necessity have to seriously challenge the armed forces of the apartheid state. Given the ANC/SACP's inability to launch much more than a limited military threat through MK, such a call seems both far-fetched and irresponsible.

⁴⁸*Financial Mail* (Johannesburg), 17 January, 1986, as quoted in Lodge (1988), p.250.

⁴⁹SACP (1986), p.3.

⁵⁰From 1985-1988 the number of MK attacks inside the country increased dramatically over previous years. For example in 1988 MK launched 281 attacks, almost five times more than in 1984. Although some of these were directed at non-military/strategic targets, the vast majority continued to represent sabotage operations on targets linked to apartheid institutions and communications. [See Barrell (1990), chp.4].

⁵¹Langa Zita, interview with author, October 1992. Zita was a student at Rhodes University in the Eastern Cape during the mid-late 1980's, later becoming a leading SACP intellectual. He is presently Witswatersrand (Johannesburg) Regional Secretary of COSATU.

⁵²For discussions of the rivalries and feuds see Ellis & Sechaba (1992), pp.176-181. They point out that the average survival time of an MK cadre inside the country was about six months. Jeremy Cronin, giving a good example of the need for internal organization, described how an MK cadre who was employed as a technician in a sensitive government installation in Pretoria had to flee the country after a minor bomb attack on the installation, pointing out that the cadre could have potentially disrupted the entire installation by using his technical knowledge to permanently damage sensitive equipment, as part of his job description [Jeremy Cronin, interview with author, October 1992]. Similarly, internal activist Jack Lewis tells of how local MK recruits often disregarded elementary security precautions by, for example, keeping hand grenades under their beds [Jack Lewis, interview with author, May 1992].

⁵³Gorbachev's reform agenda, popularized by the Russian terms of 'perestroika' and 'glasnost', ostensibly sought to reverse the economic stagnation and political inertia that characterized Soviet society. His program also applied to Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe. Gorbachev's idea was to accomplish this through the revitalization of the all-powerful Communist Party, a strategy that led to a top-down attempt at managing the economic and political chaos that followed. Gorbachev's politics ensured that the 'people' of the USSR did not have much say in the changes that did take place. Instead the process of 'change' only served to privilege the already existing elite as well as a small layer of an aspirant bourgeoisie and international capital (waiting in the wings). As it turned out, events soon overtook Gorbachev and his managed 'transition', eventually forcing him from power.

⁵⁴Over the years the ANC/SACP had been treated with generosity by their 'communist' friends. Besides military training and hardware, the ANC/SACP had sent hundreds of its members for higher education, and been

given free access to printing facilities for propaganda purposes. The cumulative effect of these ties on the ANC/SACP should not be underestimated. In addition to a heavy dose of Stalinist political theory and strategy, the ANC/SACP security department was unfortunately a good student of Stalinist methods of dealing with dissent, as the events in Angola and in their late 1980's antics showed.

⁵⁵Whether it was the Brezhnev invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 or the Gorbachev 'perestroika' of the 1980's, the SACP had no doubt proven their credentials as an obedient communist ally of Moscow.

⁵⁶It is worth noting that the beginning of the SADF military campaign in Angola occurred around the same time that the apartheid state banned the UDF (February, 1988). For the most detailed and interesting account of the South African military campaigns in Angola (alongside UNITA) and the role of security 'hawks' in the South African government see Ellis and Sechaba (1992), pp.182-190.

⁵⁷The subsequent rationalizations of the SADF for their defeat mirror those that came out of the United States military after Vietnam. Citing the fact that they did not employ their full military might, the SADF has attempted to obscure the equally important fact that to do so was politically impossible. The securocrats experienced the harsh reality of their own slogan that the tasks of counter-revolution are twenty percent military and eighty percent political.

⁵⁸Colin Bundy, "Reform in Historical Perspective," in Alex Callinicos ed., *Between Apartheid and Capitalism: Conversations with South African Socialists* (London: Bookmarks, 1992), p.92. The United States had long been pushing for a linkage between the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola and potential South African withdrawal from Namibia. For his part, Gorbachev no doubt just wanted to get out of the Cold War mess, saving a great deal of money and improving relations with the capitalist west, and in particular the United States.

⁵⁹There had already begun a sizable exodus of conservative Afrikaners from the National Party in the 1987 elections, and the failure in Angola must have only exacerbated the sense among many Afrikaners that the National Party could no longer guarantee their political and economic dominance.

⁶⁰At this point there was no indication of exactly who all of these 'moderates' were or the extent of their power within the National Party. One source points to the factor of "pragmatic reformism" that had become dominant within the ranks of the powerful and secretive Afrikaner Broederbond (the cultural/political organization of leading Afrikaner personalities dedicated to preserving Afrikaner 'culture' and political/economic power). See Robert Schrire, *Adapt or Die: The End of White Politics in South Africa* (New York: Ford Foundation, 1991), pp.87-88. What was obvious though, was that if Botha didn't act soon he wouldn't be around for long.

⁶¹See Ellis & Sechaba (1992), pp.192-193. These authors also claim that there were constant complaints from rank-and-file about the autocratic and undemocratic behavior of high-ranking ANC/SACP leaders.

The extent of Mbokodo's paranoia revealed itself with the arrest of NEC member Pallo Jordan (he was quickly released). Interestingly, Jordan has always been seen as an 'independent socialist' critical of the Stalinist practices of the SACP. One young exile has termed the state of the ANC/SACP at this time as 'a general law of the jungle' [Michael Sachs, interview with author, October 1991].

⁶²This should have been a particularly harsh blow for the SACP since they had always believed that the 'socialist' USSR would never abandon the South African revolution. And yet the SACP continued to hold up the USSR as the 'socialist model'. It would take the disintegration of the Soviet empire and Eastern Europe to finally force the SACP to come to terms with reality.

⁶³Operation Vula was a secret plan made up by select members of the NEC and PMC to build up the internal underground. Although there are still no official sources yet available on the operation, it is clear from other accounts (see Kasrils, 1993; and Ellis & Sechaba, 1992) that the aim was to provide a core internal political leadership and to secure arms caches. The operation was cut short in 1990 through exposure, but by then it was questionable whether the ANC/SACP leadership had any desire to utilize whatever it had managed to accomplish.

CHAPTER 6
FOURTH PILLAR, FIFTH COLUMN¹:
THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE STRUGGLE

The long-standing crisis of apartheid capitalism which had provided the structural background for both the actions of the apartheid state and those who struggled against it, was causing particularly serious problems by mid-1985. The effects of South Africa's increasing dependence on external finance capital, the internal uprising, and Botha's repressive brinkmanship had combined to create a situation in which the apartheid state faced a revolt from 'within'; not in the political arena, but from leading sections of domestic capital and international finance capital. Having benefited handsomely from decades of apartheid policies, but also having realized for some time the need for substantive deracialization of the system, these capitalists were now looking for an indication that the Botha government would commit itself to serious reform measures.

At the Natal National Party congress in August, 1985 Botha proved that he and his securocrats had not learned the bottom line of capitalist survival, flexibility. As an expectant domestic and international 'audience' watched, Botha basically told the world to go to hell. Stating that he was "not prepared to lead White South Africans...on a road to abdication and suicide" he warned the apartheid state's critics not to "push us too far."² Leading domestic capitalists immediately denounced the government's position, publicly calling for the scrapping of statutory racial discrimination and the beginning of negotiations (with legitimate black leaders) aimed at power sharing.³ More important from the apartheid state's perspective though, was

the subsequent decision by major international banks to call in government debt. By refusing to roll over South Africa's short-term debt, international finance capital seriously exacerbated an already deep economic crisis. The Botha government temporarily shut down the Johannesburg Stock Exchange and imposed a moratorium on the payment of South Africa's short-term debt, which had soared to over seventy percent of South Africa's total debt of \$24 billion.⁴ This in turn sparked a virtual 'freeze' on international loans, with United States banks leading the way.⁵ The South African struggle train had some new passengers on board.

The Push for Negotiations

Although South African capital had consistently issued verbal broadsides against the ANC/SACP, deriding the organization for its "socialist" outlook,⁶ it did not take long for them to put aside their fears. Within days of the loan freeze a delegation of leading representatives of South African monopoly capital, led by Anglo-American chairman Gavin Relly, journeyed to Lusaka to confer with the ANC/SACP leadership led by Oliver Tambo.⁷ Commenting on the meeting in an address on ANC/SACP Radio Freedom, President-General Oliver Tambo stated that it had been the "armed struggle" that had forced Relly and company to come to the ANC/SACP. Tambo continued:

They also want to reform the apartheid system in such a way that the end result is a system that secures their business but is minus racial discrimination. And that is what they are looking for; a system that falls short of the stipulations of the Freedom Charter but moves away from a system that thrives on violence and produces counter-violence. Well, we do not think that such a system is different.⁸

While this was a correct assessment of the agenda of monopoly capital, Tambo was talking to a converted audience. Even though the ANC/SACP leadership probably genuinely

desired the full implementation of the Freedom Charter, the logic of its own 'national democratic' conception of struggle coupled with the economic vagueness of the Charter would find common ground with a deracialized capitalism. As for Relly and company, they came away with a changed perception of the ANC/SACP. Commenting on the South African Broadcasting Corporation Radio, Relly said that he had the impression that the ANC/SACP was not "too keen" to be seen as "marxist," and that he felt they had a good understanding "of the need for free enterprise."⁹ Although the ANC/SACP leadership seemed a bit unsure about accepting the former 'enemy's' *bona fides*¹⁰, it was obvious that South African monopoly capital now thought they could deal with the ANC/SACP.

For decades the ANC/SACP had been making calls for business, and whites in general, to join the 'struggle against apartheid'. Now that it appeared that the call had been answered, the organization had to deal with two new domestic constituencies; leading sections of South African monopoly capital and white political opinion. Moreover, on the international scene the ANC/SACP found itself with two more powerful constituents that it could no longer dismiss with radical rhetoric.

International capital had just given the ANC/SACP a huge boost by their institution of financial sanctions on the apartheid state, and the United States government, through the 1986 Schultz report, had concluded that no lasting solution in South Africa was possible without the participation of the ANC/SACP.¹¹ United States Undersecretary of State Armacost cemented the new approach by recognizing that the ANC/SACP was now viewed as the "legitimate voice of the black community."¹² At the same time that their new constituents were calling for negotiations, the ANC/SACP was still issuing forth with strident calls for an insurrectionary seizure of power. The organization had some serious choices to make. With the

potential for overthrowing the apartheid state by force receding, and in the externalized environment within which most of the leadership operated, it only seemed natural that the ANC/SACP would concentrate more effort and energy on the international front.

The first indication of how the ANC/SACP was going to respond to the calls for negotiation came after the visit by the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group (EPG) to South Africa in early 1986. The EPG, appointed by the Commonwealth States (former British colonies), included personalities such as former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo and former Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser. After their visit to South Africa, where the group was given a decidedly cold reception by the Botha government, the EPG held lengthy discussions with the ANC/SACP leadership in which they proposed that there was the potential political space for legalization of the ANC/SACP conditional on the cessation of armed action and entering into negotiations with Pretoria.¹³ According to one informed observer, the ANC/SACP was nearing acceptance of the EPG proposals when the apartheid state scuttled any hopes by launching raids on supposed MK bases in neighboring countries.¹⁴

With the EPG mission behind it the ANC/SACP leadership proceeded to crisscross the globe during 1986-1988. Besides a host of international non-governmental and solidarity conferences, meetings were held with top British, Soviet, Japanese, Australian, and United States government officials, as well as with prominent Afrikaners from home. A leading ANC member complained:

If you went to Lusaka to see a member of the working committee, if you found one there you were lucky...the top members of the ANC were permanently in the air...it had a terrible effect. So in fact, this great national leadership of the ANC in Lusaka was really individuals operating in their own departments and in their own way that had a tremendously debilitating effect and it

meant that international and solidarity work took priority over everything else.¹⁵

While the formal content of these meetings probably consisted of no more than diplomatic exchanges and the 'sounding out' of respective approaches, their real importance lay elsewhere. They represented not only the broad acceptance of the ANC/SACP as the major representative of opposition to the apartheid state by political and economic representatives of capital, but also a coming home of sorts for the ANC/SACP leadership. Although the armed struggle would continue to be its main pressure tactic, the ANC/SACP leadership were now openly confirming their macro-strategy of seeking a negotiated settlement.

Far too often there has been the tendency amongst both observers and participants (of, and in, the South African liberation struggle) to explain the 1980's turn to seeking a negotiated settlement as the sole result of objective conditions.¹⁶ Thus, it can be claimed that the subsequent character of the ANC/SACP's 'national democratic' struggle represents 'pragmatic realism', since the organization is merely operating within the given objective conditions and 'balance of power' considerations. Such an explanation is not only crudely structuralist, but also creates the impression that the actions and conscious strategies of the ANC/SACP leadership were mere spectators.

With all the international activity creating questions about the strategic and tactical intentions of the ANC/SACP, the leadership needed to provide clarification to its constituents. Many of the ANC/SACP rank-and-file, especially the cadres of MK, became suspicious that the leadership was going to unilaterally enter into negotiations with the apartheid state. One MK cadre who had a feeling that something was "drastically wrong" described how the leadership were "summoned...and they told us there was no way the ANC would just go into talks. In 1988 the rumors surfaced again and we were again told that there would be no

talks."¹⁷ Whatever the leadership were telling MK cadres in the camps, they definitely were giving a different message to other constituencies. In an early 1986 statement that appeared in the pages of the British newspaper the *Observer*, ANC International Affairs head (now Deputy President) Thabo Mbeki stated:

The call you make to people is the same, saying you are not prepared to negotiate, that you must intensify the offensive. But in the course of that offensive it is clear that one of the most important things is breaking up the power structure...Out of this you will get a re-alignment of forces. We are not talking of overthrowing the government but of turning so many people against it that it would be forced to do what Ian Smith did.¹⁸

Mbeki's example of former Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith refers to the Lancaster House settlement in which Smith's neo-apartheid government negotiated the country's independence with the leaders of the two liberation movements [Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU)]. It could not have escaped Mbeki's attention that the outcome of Zimbabwe's national liberation had led to the very thing that the ANC/SACP leadership had stated they wanted to avoid (i.e. a deracialized capitalism). By 1986 it was crystal clear that the Zimbabwe government of Robert Mugabe had abandoned any real attempts to fundamentally transform the social and economic relations of the inherited capitalist system. Indeed, Zimbabwe was well on its way to being an important ally of international finance capital [through the facilities of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank].

One final note on the Mbeki statement; it comes very close to confirming the existence of a double agenda on the part of the leadership, at least at the rhetorical level. Mbeki's 'call' to the people and subsequent practice cannot be purely adjudged as wily tactics designed to reach the

ultimate strategic goal. People who give their lives for the 'struggle' (and the organizations that lead that struggle), should not be used as pawns in the big chess game of politics no matter what the rationalizations.

It is important here to reiterate what was behind such apparent contradictions. This study has argued that the main reason ANC/SACP leaders such as Thabo Mbeki pursued these kinds of strategies can be traced to two sources: firstly, the conscious practice of an externalized, narrowly conceived, and racially bound struggle for 'national liberation' that presumed both the 'will' of the 'people' and the potentials of their struggles; secondly, a 'neutralized' and re-active approach to the prevailing 'objective conditions' wherein these conditions negate (as part of the dialectic) the possibilities and process of revolutionary struggle. Mbeki's statement, if fully publicized, would no doubt have been less than heartening to those millions of 'people' in whose name he was 'leading'.

This was followed by two NEC statements which confirmed beyond any doubt that the leadership was willing to enter into negotiations under certain conditions. In their January 8, 1987 statement the NEC stated that "...we reiterate our commitment to seize any opportunity that may arise, to participate in a negotiated resolution of the conflict in our country."¹⁹ However, it was a special NEC statement on "The Question of Negotiations" in October, 1987 that specifically set out, for the first time, the ANC/SACP's strategic approach. Arguing that the "racist regime" had raised the issue of negotiations "to defuse the struggle inside our country" and to "defeat the continuing campaign for comprehensive and mandatory sanctions," the NEC stated:

Once more, we would like to reaffirm that the ANC and the masses of our people as a whole are ready and willing to enter into genuine negotiations provided they are aimed at the transformation of our country into a united and non-racial democracy. This, and only this, should be the

objective of any negotiating process.²⁰ (original emphasis).

Rejecting the idea of unilaterally suspending the armed struggle, the statement declared that "... any cessation of hostilities would have to be negotiated and entail agreed action by both sides...."²¹ Noting the "treacherous and deceitful nature of the apartheid regime," the NEC "insisted" that "the apartheid regime would have to demonstrate its seriousness by implementing various measures to create a climate conducive to...negotiations."²² These were:

...the unconditional release of all political prisoners, detainees, all captured freedom fighters and prisoners of war as well as the cessation of all political trials. The state of emergency would have to be lifted, the army and the police withdrawn from the townships and confined to their barracks. Similarly, all repressive legislation and all laws empowering the regime to limit freedom of assembly, speech, the press and so on, would have to be repealed.²³

The statement concluded by stating that the ANC/SACP was "opposed to any secret negotiations," because "we firmly believe that the people themselves must participate in shaping their destiny and would therefore have to be involved in any process of negotiations."²⁴

The effect of the NEC statement was to firmly set the ANC/SACP on a negotiations course. By publicly setting out maximum conditions for negotiations the ANC/SACP leadership was sending a clear signal that they were prepared to engage in compromise (after all that is what negotiations are all about). At the same time, in order to strengthen their hand at any future negotiating table, the ANC/SACP insisted that the "struggle" be intensified "on all fronts."²⁵

It was thus not surprising that one of the NEC's next statements stressed the "centrality of the armed struggle," and urged followers to "transform our offensive into a general people's war."²⁶ No doubt, such rejoinders were

partly designed to reassure the rank-and-file that they were not being sold down the river, but they also highlighted one of the historical contradictions attached to the ANC/SACP leadership's approach to the national liberation struggle; do as we say, not necessarily as we do.

At the conceptual level, the organization would now utilize mass struggle and armed action for two specific purposes: to act as pressure levers on the apartheid state in the lead up to any future negotiations; and to ensure that their mass base was 'involved' in the macro-strategy of a negotiated settlement. It remained to be seen how this would translate into actual practice.

The most detailed ANC/SACP 'response' to any remaining questions concerning the path it had chosen, were contained in the organization's Constitutional Guidelines released in the latter half of 1988 (see Appendix C). Designed to "convert" the Freedom Charter "from a vision for the future into a constitutional reality," the guidelines committed the ANC/SACP to a political program that closely resembled liberal bourgeois democracy. Calling for a "unitary state" with distinct executive, judicial, and legislative branches, and the guarantee of individual human rights through a Bill of Rights, the ANC/SACP's envisioned a "democratic and non-racial" South Africa. On the economic front the guidelines were once again consistent with a liberal bourgeois outlook. It was stated that "the economy will be a mixed one," and that there would be constitutional protection of "property for personal use and consumption." As for the role of the state, it would "ensure that the entire economy serves the interest and well being of the entire population."

In broad terms, the guidelines represented ideological continuity with the Freedom Charter. While the ANC/SACP had now provided a more specifically defined vision of political pluralism and civil liberties in a post-apartheid South Africa, the economic clauses represented a change from charterist formulations. Nationalization had now been

replaced with an even more vague notion of the role of the state as having "the right to determine the general context in which economic life takes place," in which the "private sector of the economy shall be obliged to co-operate with the state...in promoting social well-being."²⁷

The guidelines cemented the ANC/SACP's acceptance of a negotiated path to national liberation (no liberation movement which foresees itself forcibly overthrowing the enemy has ever preemptively revealed constitutional guidelines). More importantly though, the guidelines showed that the practical strategies adopted by the ANC/SACP (formally enshrined at Morogoro) were, in the final analysis, fundamentally linked to an accommodative, negotiated national liberation. After failing to come anywhere close to a seizure of power, the ANC/SACP were now reverting to their historical path of accommodative politics, trusting that the continued activity of their mass base would ensure a generally progressive outcome.²⁸

What is noteworthy about both the NEC statement on negotiations and the Constitutional Guidelines is the complete absence of any mention of the role and place (both present and future) of international and domestic monopoly capital, and their political representatives.²⁹ These very powerful forces were not just sitting on the sidelines waiting for the ANC/SACP and the apartheid state to come to terms. Even before the ANC/SACP had publicly released their conditions for negotiations Anglo-American chair Gavin Relly had let it be known that domestic monopoly capital had its own similar agenda. While chiding the ANC/SACP for its continued adherence to sanctions, Relly sounded as though he was preempting the NEC's statement. He argued:

Among ourselves [monopoly capital] we have reached agreement that statutory apartheid must go, that the political process be opened up by the release of prisoners of conscience, that political parties, currently banned, be allowed to operate within the rule of law and that real attempts be

made for constructive negotiation between all parties in South Africa.³⁰

Similarly, the United States government, which was now acting as the major international political power broker in Southern Africa, had grasped the necessity of creating a climate conducive to ANC/SACP acceptance of a negotiated settlement. Besides continuing to upgrade its "development assistance" to South African blacks³¹, the United States government was attempting to find ways of influencing the ANC/SACP. In its 1987 report to the United States Congress the State Department had argued that pressure for a negotiated solution would weaken the cohesion of the ANC/SACP, and implied that this might result in a moderate-radical split within the organization. Such a scenario would no doubt serve the interests of those who sought a deracialized capitalism since they could then deal with the 'moderates', perceived as more amenable to such an outcome.³²

The implications of these agendas did not go completely unrecognized by the ANC/SACP leadership. In mid-1986 Joe Slovo had warned of a potential dilemma for the organization: "Premature speculation about possible compromises in order to tempt broader forces such as the liberal bourgeoisie on to our side may serve to blunt the edge of the people's revolutionary militancy."³³ ANC/SACP NEC member Mac Maharaj recognized the implicit economic rationale of such agendas. He wrote:

...monopoly capital has demonstrated some concern about the overall implications of the drift towards escalating destabilization. Its concern is similar to that of the major imperialist powers who are preoccupied about the absence of a stable political solution to guarantee the long term future of capitalism in both South Africa and Southern Africa.³⁴

Unfortunately, the ANC/SACP leadership were not paying very close attention to their own analysis/advice. Despite such cautionary rejoinders, the ANC/SACP had taken the

negotiation plunge and more than ever was relying on international pressure to force the apartheid state to do the same. At the helm of those international pressures was the sanctions movement, and it was this weapon that had increasingly become the focal point of the ANC/SACP's international pillar of struggle.

Sanctions: Misplaced Reliance

At the heart of any discussion of the use of sanctions as a political and economic weapon is the question of imperialism. Whether taken in its specific or more generalized form, imperialism relates to the global role and character of monopoly capital and correspondingly to the activities of capitalist states. The practical effect of imperialism, itself a logical outcome of capitalist development, manifests itself in several ways: the servicing of the accumulative needs of an increasingly monopolized capital, particularly finance capital; the use of capitalist state power to create optimum conditions for such accumulation on a global scale¹⁵; and the use of political and economic intervention in order to 'mediate' the crises that arise in capitalist states from monopoly capital's own form of accumulation.¹⁶

The relevance of imperialism to the question of sanctions is all the more important in the context of South Africa's highly internationalized political economy. In such a context, a sanctions campaign can potentially deepen the existing dependence of the apartheid state on international capital inputs. Specifically, financial sanctions emanating from a highly centralized international finance capital would have the most direct effect on an apartheid South Africa, heavily (and consciously) dependent as it was (and still is) on access to international sources of finance capital. The corresponding impact of trade and other types of sanctions, while having the potential to cause economic

problems, would be minimal in contrast, being dependent for any potential success on a multitude of actors and concerted adherence. As will become clear, the sanctions campaign of the ANC/SACP, in mirroring its general strategic united front anti-apartheid approach, allowed the international 'struggle' to be heavily influenced by the very international forces whose interests were opposed to any radical economic transformation in South Africa.

Beginning in the 1950's, the ANC had made appeals to the international 'community' to implement boycotts of South African products as a 'non-violent' alternative, and in order to register their 'moral' opposition to apartheid. This was soon expanded to calls for the United Nations (UN) to implement comprehensive and mandatory trade and arms boycotts on the apartheid state. However, it was not until 1977 that the UN Security Council imposed a mandatory arms boycott and only in 1985 did the Council urge all UN member states to impose comprehensive trade sanctions.³⁷ Besides its efforts at the UN the ANC/SACP relied on more friendly individual nations, in particular the Scandinavian countries, and solidarity organizations such as the British Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) in the west to carry the sanctions struggle forward.³⁸ Most of these efforts though, were concentrated on attempts to get governments to implement arms, trade, political, cultural, sporting, etc. boycotts and transnational corporations to disinvest, all with varying degrees of (but generally limited), success.³⁹

While many governments voluntarily acceded to the ANC/SACP's international sanctions campaign, their reasons for doing so were just as often for self-interest. For example, the Australian government, which vigorously backed the sanctions call, had every reason to want South African coal off the global market, because of its own large-scale coal production. Likewise, many of the myriad anti-apartheid organizations that sprang up all over Europe and the United

States became homes for professional "activists" for whom the sanctions campaign was a life-line.⁴⁰

The ANC/SACP's sanctions movement brought on board all kinds of political animals whose anti-apartheid stance was incredibly suspect. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the involvement of 'liberal' United States Senator Edward Kennedy. Not only was Kennedy the leading political representative of American 'liberal' capitalism, but also a perennial Presidential candidate for the Democratic Party. It was Kennedy who unabashedly proclaimed in a *Washington Post* editorial that "it would be sad if America's role as the natural leader of the world anti-apartheid effort had to await the election of a new president."⁴¹

Although the ANC/SACP's sanctions campaign received widespread support its effect had yet, in the words of Oliver Tambo, to deny "the regime the means through which it can sustain and perpetuate itself."⁴² It took the 'voluntary' implementation of financial sanctions by international finance capital in mid-1985 to register substantive economic impact on apartheid capitalism.

Up until that time the ANC/SACP had experienced little success in getting financial sanctions imposed on the apartheid state. After the refusal of international finance capital to roll over the short term debt of the apartheid state, based as it was on the parlous state of the apartheid political economy⁴³, the ANC/SACP began to pay more attention to the potential of specifically financial sanctions. In a definitive ANC/SACP statement on sanctions, Neva Makgetla wrote in the pages of *Sechaba* (the ANC mouthpiece) in September, 1985:

...foreign investment and trade have provided a crucial prop for minority rule in South Africa. Given the fundamental external dependence of the economy, only foreign inputs allow the regime to meet its military and strategic needs. In addition, foreign investment serves the political purpose of giving western governments a stake in

maintaining the *status quo* in South Africa. The call for sanctions responds to these considerations.⁴⁴

Giving political content to this, Oliver Tambo stated that "sanctions are a weapon that the international community can and must use against the racist regime."⁴⁵

With other types of sanctions having limited economic effect, the ANC/SACP and their international anti-apartheid allies began to wage a far more concerted financial sanctions campaign. From 1986-1989 there were several failed attempts to halt successive debt-rescheduling deals between the apartheid state and creditor banks/institutions.⁴⁶ Two other demands made by the ANC/SACP-led financial sanctions campaign, no new loans and no trade finance, met with more success although they did not possess as much punch as a total halt on debt rescheduling.

What was clear though, was that international finance capital, even with pressure from an array of western anti-apartheid forces, would ultimately base their decisions on what they considered to be in their self-interest. While international financial institutions/banks clearly understood the political mileage they could get from being seen as anti-apartheid, their main concerns were the longer-term security of their assets and continued access to the South African market. Indeed, the bankers and financiers knew that because of its structural dependence on external finance, the apartheid state would sooner or later have to make the necessary political reforms in order to avert economic collapse. As a financial sanctions report commissioned by the Australian government and endorsed by the ANC/SACP and its anti-apartheid allies clearly enunciated:

It is one of the ironies of the peace process in southern Africa that it owes its existence, at least in part, to the actions of western bankers...What the financial sanction has done is to reinforce tendencies that were already present

in apartheid itself...the financial sanction works with and not against tendencies inherent in the economy of international finance. South Africa is being excluded from the world stock of savings not because bankers and financiers are ideologically united in their detestation of apartheid...but because most of them now see South Africa as a bad risk...the financial sanction is almost ideal, because...it is by and large a sanction that market forces work to encourage.⁴⁷

The practical result of the financial sanctions campaigns was a strategic convergence (albeit, not a planned one) between the ANC/SACP-led international anti-apartheid forces and western governments, banks, and international financial institutions.⁴⁸ By the late 1980's all 'parties' wanted apartheid to go (for different reasons), and all were agreed that a negotiated settlement was the best way to do so. International financiers and bankers began to set preconditions for South Africa's renewed access to global financial markets: the unbanning of the main black political organizations; the release of political prisoners; the lifting of the state of emergency; a commitment to end all violence; and the beginning of 'meaningful' negotiations.⁴⁹

The ANC/SACP, South African monopoly capital, and several western governments had previously converged on the conditions for substantive political negotiation, and now international finance capital was joining the fray. These international actors were also keenly aware that there were sections of the ANC/SACP leadership with whom they could potentially find common ideological ground. As one leading SACP official has admitted, the activities of these international forces were no doubt partly designed to "explore the possibilities of a comprador bourgeoisie."⁵⁰

One of the major reasons why such a convergence developed was the way in which the ANC/SACP approached the sanctions question. While correctly identifying the Achilles' heel of the apartheid state and the historical rationale for foreign investment, the implementation of the

ANC/SACP's sanctions campaign was lacking in politically strategic foresight and fundamentally biased towards independent action by state and capital.³¹ The organization's 'united front' sanctions strategy took control of the sanctions movement, and by consequence the strategy of negotiations, out of the hands of both the ANC/SACP and the 'broad mass' of those it affected the most, South Africans.

This was particularly the case with financial sanctions where international finance capital was able to serve both its own interests and be reform champions at the same time. The degree to which international finance capital was able to play both sides of the coin was demonstrated in mid-1989, when financial institutions and banks rescheduled South Africa's debt before the ANC/SACP and its international allies were able to mount an effective anti-campaign (something they had been planning for awhile). By doing so, international finance capital succeeded in preserving South Africa's future access to global financial markets (and their own access to a lucrative pipeline of accumulation), and trumping the ANC/SACP in the reform pressure stakes.³²

With the impetus for a sanctions strategy resting squarely on the shoulders of foreign states and international finance capital, the politics of the sanctions movement became increasingly removed from the ANC/SACP's base constituency. As a result, the sanctions strategy of the ANC/SACP "created its own parameters" which logically necessitated the jettisoning of elements of internal mass struggle and organization.³³ In particular, the 'leading role' of the working class, which the ANC/SACP had continuously reaffirmed in its theoretical formulations and strategic statements, became virtually non-existent.³⁴

Even though there was a generalized uncritical acceptance of the ANC/SACP sanctions strategy amongst worker leadership in South Africa, some workers were not as convinced. At the 1987 COSATU Congress a sanctions

resolution was passed by delegates which emphatically declared that "the organized working class in South Africa have not had control of sanctions campaigns."⁵⁵ Similarly an article in the *S.A. Metalworker* argued:

...the (sanctions) campaign overseas has been run as if the working class in South Africa had no independent demands. Most importantly the campaign is being run as if workers themselves had no power to control the foreign companies...the campaign ignores the fact that workers in trade unions have fought long and bitter struggles to have some say in the way in which their lives are organized... Surely the issue for workers is not the amount invested or where it comes from, but how workers can begin to control these investments so as to make a real contribution to the struggle to create a South Africa which is free from capitalist oppression and exploitation....⁵⁶

While the ANC/SACP continued to preach the gospel of internal mass struggle and organization, 'people's power', and the leading role of the working class, their practice did not quite match up. The sanctions-cum-negotiations strategy had seriously limited the influence and role of the 'broad mass' and independent working class, the sole ANC/SACP constituencies capable of resisting those forces intent on delivering a truncated national liberation. Unfortunately, the dye was cast. The ANC/SACP leadership was not going to let anything or anybody stand in the way. As NEC member Thabo Mbeki succinctly put it:

We have had one goal for seventy-seven years: to get rid of apartheid. Anyone who has accepted that goal has been welcomed into the ANC to join and help us...Anything which seeks to divide us, whether from the left or the right, seeks to break the unity which the ANC prizes above everything.⁵⁷

Toward February, 1990

While the externalized ANC/SACP leadership were trying to find an acceptable way to the negotiating table, the

individual incarnation of the organization and its struggle, Nelson Mandela, was busy doing the same from inside his prison cell. Following the lead of his organization, Mandela had first suggested the route of negotiations to his captors in 1986. Acting as a conduit between the apartheid state and the external leadership, Mandela began to assume the mantle of leadership of the ANC/SACP once more: a development that was hastened when Oliver Tambo suffered a debilitating stroke in August, 1989.

Before his meeting with Botha in mid-1989 Mandela submitted a lengthy letter to the apartheid state which revealed for the first time that the ANC/SACP was willing to compromise on its basic guiding principle of liberation struggle: majority rule. Accusing the apartheid state of not being serious about negotiations due to its demand that the ANC/SACP renounce violence, Mandela sent a clear message of accommodation: "The truth is that the government is not yet ready for negotiation and for the sharing of political power with blacks" (my emphasis).⁵⁸

At virtually the same time as the Mandela letter was being read by Botha, the SACP was holding its Seventh Congress in Havana, Cuba. If Botha read the new SACP program entitled "Path to Power" he could have been excused for being somewhat confused. While Mandela was chiding the apartheid state for not entering into negotiations with the ANC/SACP and offering a vision of power-sharing, the SACP had this to say:

...all-round mass action, merging with organized armed activity, led by a well-organized underground, and international pressures are the keys to the build-up for the seizure of power. Seizure of power will be a product of escalating and progressively merging mass political and military struggle with the likelihood of culminating in an insurrection.

On possible negotiations the SACP stated:

We should be on our guard against the clear objective of our ruling class and their imperialist allies who see negotiation as a way of preempting a revolutionary transformation. The imperialists seek their own kind of transformation which goes beyond the reform limits of the present regime but which will, at the same time, frustrate the basic objectives of the struggling masses. And they hope to achieve this by pushing the liberation movement into negotiations before it is strong enough to back its basic demands with sufficient power on the ground (original emphasis).⁵⁹

It was clear that the SACP leadership were either completely out of touch with the reality of events, or as is more likely, trying to balance the inevitable with rhetorical counterweights.⁶⁰ The apparent duality within the ANC/SACP revealed once again that while the immediate outcome of the organization's liberation struggle was not without its internal critics, the strategic path followed possessed a specific logic bound to a politics of accommodation, objective conditions notwithstanding.

Hard on the heels of Mandela's overtures (which were not immediately answered by an ailing and politically weakened Botha), the ANC/SACP along with its internal allies drafted what came to be known as the Harare Declaration⁶¹ (see Appendix D). The drafting of the Declaration came soon after an extensive conference held in Lusaka (June 29 - July 2) between top leaders in the ANC and SACP and a large delegation from the Five Freedoms Forum (a loosely-knit internal non-governmental (NGO) organization dominated by white liberals). While there was nothing sinister about the externalized liberation movement meeting and talking with wide sectors of South African society, the conference went far beyond informal discussion. Indeed, the proceedings of the conference and the subsequent Harare Declaration, clearly reveal substantive links between the inputs of the Five Freedoms delegation around central constitutional and policy issues and the text of the Harare Declaration.⁶²

Combining the 1987 NEC statement on negotiations with the 1988 Constitutional Guidelines, the Harare Declaration clearly set out the ANC/SACP's desire for a negotiated settlement. Arguing that a "political settlement" leading to a "non-racial democracy" had always been the "preference of the majority of the people of South Africa," the ANC/SACP declared:

We believe that a conjuncture of circumstances exists which, if there is demonstrable readiness on the part of the Pretoria regime to engage in negotiations genuinely and seriously, could create the possibility to end apartheid through negotiations.

The conditions under which such negotiations could take place remained the same as those previously stated by the NEC, and it was reiterated that any suspension of the armed struggle would have to come through a negotiated "mutually binding cease-fire." The document concluded by laying out the ANC/SACP's vision of the formation of an interim government to draw up a new constitution and supervise elections.

The Harare Declaration was the culmination of the organization's own choice of political strategy for national liberation, and further reflected the multitude of pressures and influence of international forces. Ever since the internal uprising had effectively been crushed and the apartheid state had wreaked havoc with its regional destabilization, a troubled ANC/SACP leadership turned more than ever to its international pillar of struggle. The pressures for a negotiated settlement had correspondingly increased from all quarters: from the battered Front-line States; from western governments; from international and domestic capital; from a rapidly disintegrating USSR; and from liberal supporters. With any hopes for a seizure of power having progressively diminished along with the organization's ability to build a viable internal

underground linked to armed struggle, the ANC/SACP's negotiations strategy was a *fait accompli*.

ANC/SACP leaders, in an effort to present the Harare Declaration as a popular expression of the desires of the 'oppressed', began to make a virtue out of what had become a necessity. Negotiations were now presented as a 'new terrain of struggle' for power whose character and direction would be 'determined by the masses'.⁶³ It was stressed that negotiations should be seen not as replacing armed and mass struggle, but rather as complementary to them. Although the extent to which this would be the case remained to be seen, the ANC/SACP had passed the point of no return. Given the general state of the external organization and the combined international and regional pressures it now faced, a negotiated settlement was really the only route it could take. As if to confirm this, on 18 January Secretary-General Alfred Nzo had mistakenly read out to a group of journalists an internal document which admitted that the ANC/SACP "do not have the capacity within our country to intensify the armed struggle in any meaningful way."⁶⁴

In coming to this strategic cul-de-sac (i.e. negotiations), the ANC/SACP had not merely been helpless hostages to the crushing weight of the 'objective conditions'. As I have argued, the historic macro-strategy of the ANC/SACP leadership had been one of accommodation (Thabo Mbeki preferred to call it one of negotiation). The leadership were now tacitly admitting that the varying tactics (not strategy) used (e.g. armed struggle), were only part of an overall strategy of negotiation which were, of course, what the 'people' had wanted all along. The very practice of decades of liberation struggle had effected and, in turn, been affected by the 'objective realities' (what this study has termed the 'dialectic of struggle'); the case was no different now.

This study has made the case for viewing the 'objective reality' of a negotiated liberation as the result of

conscious/subjective strategic choices made by the ANC/SACP leadership. This means the ways in which they conceived of, and led the struggle; a process which was logically linked to the changing objective conditions under which that struggle took place. What might have been preferable to negotiations (e.g. an insurrectionary triumph of 'people's power'), was possible only to the extent that the character and conduct of the liberation struggle, as practiced by the ANC/SACP, was determined by those in whose name it was being waged.

On the internal front the National Party had jettisoned Botha (who had recently suffered a stroke) in late 1989, replacing him with a more reform-minded F.W. De Klerk. De Klerk immediately let it be known that things were going to be different by consciously allowing greater freedom of activity. With the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) (the new name for the reconstituted UDF) structures inside the country having embarked on a new Defiance campaign to pressure the apartheid state, De Klerk responded by backing off from his predecessor's harsh repression and confrontation. Emboldened by the political space thus created, the MDM held a national Conference for a Democratic Future in December, 1989 at which the Harare Declaration was formally adopted. The ANC/SACP's internal allies had jumped onboard the negotiations train.

Acutely aware of the need to stem the continuing economic and political crisis of apartheid capitalism, and faced with mounting internal and international pressures to move towards serious negotiations, De Klerk made his first move by releasing seven prominent ANC/SACP leaders in October.⁶⁵ This was followed by a international diplomatic offensive designed to lessen South Africa's isolation and give the impression that the new government was committed to change.

It was becoming increasingly clear that De Klerk and his advisors had grasped the need to make a decisive break

with the past. If there was going to be any chance of dealing with the organic crisis of apartheid capitalism, De Klerk knew he would have to pursue a political settlement with the ANC/SACP. Despite its internal weaknesses and its inability to present a serious armed threat to the apartheid state, the ANC/SACP (alongside its internal allies) had emerged from the 1980's as politically hegemonic. As the main opponent of the apartheid state, the ANC/SACP along with the union movement were central to any negotiated settlement.

Although no one could have known the speed with which De Klerk would move, one thing was clear by the beginning of the new decade: by releasing Mandela and engaging an ANC/SACP leadership committed to a peaceful negotiated settlement, De Klerk would give the white ruling class the best chance to maintain substantial political and economic control over the ensuing process.

NOTES

¹The fourth pillar refers to one of four stated aims of the ANC/SACP's liberation struggle; the international isolation of the apartheid regime (it usually appeared in written documents as the last of the four aims).

²Schire (1991), pp.82-83. The event came to be known as the 'Rubicon' speech because Botha had said that South Africa had "crossed the Rubicon." Obviously, Botha's idea of what constituted a Rubicon and that of domestic and international capital were far apart.

³Many of these capitalists supported Gatsha Buthelezi's Inkata movement, seeing it as friendly to free enterprise and a counterweight to what they perceived as a 'socialist' ANC/SACP.

⁴Alan Hirsch, "Sanctions, Loans, and the South African Economy," in Mark Orkin ed., *Sanctions Against Apartheid* (Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 1989), p.270.

⁵The prime mover behind the initial refusal to roll over the debt had been Chase Manhattan Bank which interestingly enough had an extremely shaky loan portfolio. Within months of the freeze, total lending by United States banks had fallen by nearly half of what it was before the announcement [See IRRIC, "U.S. Banks and South Africa," Analysis L (Washington D.C., 1989)].

⁶Asked what the talks would be about, Gavin Relly, chairperson of South Africa's largest corporation Anglo-American, stated

I think that there is a coherent sense for businessmen to want to find out if there is common ground... that a free enterprise society is demonstrably better at creating wealth than some type of Marxist socialism. I would have thought it was self-evident... that nobody wants to play a role in a country where the economy... was destroyed either by a sort of Marxist approach to wealth creation, or by a... revolution. (*Weekly Mail*, September 13-19, 1985)

⁷Those involved in putting the delegation together read like a who's who of South African monopoly capital. In addition to Relly they included Anglo-American director Zach De Beer (later to lead the

Democratic Party); Tony Bloom of the huge Premier Group; Peter Sorour of the South Africa Foundation; Mike Rosholt of Barlow Rand; Fred du Plessis of the insurance giant Sanlam; and Chris Ball of Barclays Bank. On the ANC/SACP side, besides Tambo, were Chris Hani, Thabo Mbeki, Pallo Jordan, Mac Maharaj, and James Stuart (Tambo and Jordan being the only non-SACP members). [See *Business Day*, September 3, 1985; and *Sunday Times* (SA), September 15, 1985].

⁸Interview with Oliver Tambo on Radio Freedom, 15 October, 1985 (University of the Western Cape: Mayibuye Centre Archives Microfilm). Radio Freedom was the ANC/SACP radio broadcasting from Lusaka.

⁹Interview with Gavin Relly on the South African Broadcasting Corporation, September 14, 1985 (University of the Western Cape: Mayibuye Centre Archives Microfilm). No doubt, Relly was also attempting to influence his audience of white South Africans.

¹⁰The ANC/SACP issued a statement soon after the meeting in response to calls for a national convention to discuss negotiations stating that the movement rejected attempts by "self appointed bigwigs, elitists, etc. to cobble together settlements of the fate of the country over the heads of the people" [See Howard Barrell, "No National convention without Equality says the ANC," *Weekly Mail*, September 27 - October 3, 1985].

¹¹Mark Phillips & Colin Coleman, "Another Kind of War: Strategies for transition in the era of negotiations," *Transformation* 9, (1989), p.13. George Schultz was United States Secretary of State at the time. This report marked the extension of the constructive engagement strategy of the Reagan administration, which had previously focused solely on pressuring the apartheid state.

¹²*The Sowetan*, December 22, 1986.

¹³A discussion of the EPG Report as well as measures subsequently recommended to the Commonwealth are contained in; Independent Expert Study Group, *South Africa: The Sanctions Report* (London: Penguin Books, 1989).

¹⁴Tom Lodge, "The African National Congress after the Kabwe Conference," in *South African Review* 4, Glenn Moss & Ingrid Obery eds., (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987), p.13. In the article Lodge implies that the ANC/SACP would benefit from the implementation of such proposals, as it would give the organization a chance to "entrench" itself legally inside the country. While on the surface this perspective might appear to be a simple matter of wanting to go back home and 'engage' the enemy on more even terrain, it ignores the complexities inherent in such a decision. Having been an externally-based liberation movement for so long the organization would find it extremely difficult to adapt to internal conditions of legality, adjust to practical party politics, and explain such a move to their militant base constituency involved in bitter internal battles. Indeed, for the ANC/SACP to have made such a move in 1986/1987 would have clearly weakened the organization in many ways. As it turned out, the decisions of the

ANC/SACP in 1990 showed that even four years later it was not prepared to take on the National Party.

¹⁵Ben Turok, interview with author, October 1992. Turok went on to say

Tambo has said to me on many occasions that "I must stop running around, I must turn my attention to the internal" - he did not. The reason is that the external has an appetite bourgeoisie without an end, the more contacts you make the more you have. There were many presidents and prime ministers that wanted constant consultation with Tambo and this reflected the protocol of the international circuit. There were odd characters, like [MK commander] Kasriis, who were dedicated to the Frontline, but I think the balance, the best personnel, were engaged in this international thing and a lot of us were very critical of this.

¹⁶For examples of this from 'observers' see Meli (1988); Holland (1989); and Magubane (1989). 'Participant' examples are to be found throughout ANC/SACP literature in the post-February, 1990 period particularly in the pages of the respective journals of the ANC and the SACP (*Mayibuye* and *The African Communist*).

¹⁷"Disillusioned return of an MK hero," *Star*, April 28, 1991.

¹⁸*Observer* (UK), March 2, 1986. For an excellent analysis of the Zimbabwean example see Patrick Bond, "Finance and Uneven Development in Zimbabwe," (PhD. Dissertation submitted to the Department of Geography, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1992). Forthcoming publication by Africa World Press.

¹⁹ANC, NEC Statement 8 January, 1987 (Lusaka, pamphlet).

²⁰ANC, "Statement of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress on the Question of Negotiations," October 9, 1987 (Lusaka, pamphlet).

²¹*Ibid.*

²²*Ibid.*

²³*Ibid.*

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵*Umsebenzi*, 3, No.4, Fourth Quarter, 1987.

²⁶ANC, NEC Statement, August 17, 1988 (Lusaka, pamphlet).

²⁷For an interesting analysis of the Constitutional Guidelines from a 'democratic socialist' perspective see Daryl Glaser, "Democracy,

Socialism, and the future," *Work in Progress*, No.'s 56/57, (November/December, 1988), pp.28-30. Glaser welcomes the political clauses but chides the ANC/SACP for failing to "hold out a more radical vision of South Africa's longer-term economic future" (p.30).

⁹It should be noted that the calls coming from inside the country, emanating from the youth and workers, were for a socialist future. If the ANC/SACP leadership had polled their own mass base and allowed their active 'involvement' in drawing up the guidelines, they would surely have come up with a very different document.

The guidelines have often been described as a tactical move designed to appeal to the broadest spectrum of opinion and ensure a smooth transition to 'national democracy' (the first stage). However, it must be remembered that ANC/SACP theory and practice in essence demanded a united front strategy. The Constitutional Guidelines, far from being a short-term tactical maneuver, represented the logical extension of ANC/SACP long-term strategy. As the events after February 1990 have shown, the clauses contained in the Guidelines have, if anything, been watered down even more.

¹⁰Notice the way in which the NEC posed the question of who was 'raising' the issue of negotiations. Even though the Botha government had put forward their own agenda for negotiation, the powerful impetus and respective agendas of other international and domestic forces is completely ignored by the NEC statement. Indeed, the NEC statement leaves the impression that the liberation struggle is one pitting the global forces of moral good (albeit with different conceptions of what that constitutes), against the evil apartheid empire.

¹⁰Gavin Relly, "The Perversity of Sanctions," Address given to the South Africa-Britain Trade Association, 26 August, 1986, supplement to *Optima* 34, No.3 (September, 1986). Earlier in the year another Anglo-American executive Zach de Beer had provided the rationale for monopoly capital's agenda. He had told the Royal Commonwealth Society that,

We all understand how years of apartheid have caused many blacks to reject the economic as well as the political system. But we dare not allow the baby of free enterprise to be thrown out with the bathwater of apartheid [*Financial Times* (UK), June 10, 1986]

Relly's attack on the ANC/SACP for maintaining their calls for sanctions is understandable but somewhat misplaced. The financial sanctions instituted by international finance capital were creating serious credit problems for domestic business and Relly's calls for a political settlement were no doubt designed to hopefully create a stability which would result in the lifting of those financial sanctions so he and his cohorts could get down to regular business. While the ANC/SACP certainly had a degree of international moral influence the dependent factor as far as any lifting of financial sanctions was concerned lay with getting the ANC/SACP to the negotiating table rather than with the degree of moral suasion which the organization could continue to muster.

³¹See "U.S. Assistance to South Africa Report," State Department Fact Sheet, April 22, 1986. The "development aid" consisted of financial assistance for a "Human Rights Fund"; a "Labor Union Training" project through the AFL-CIO; the "Special Self-Help Fund" for "community development"; higher education programs for students to study in the U.S.; and funds for "strengthening democratic institutions" run by the National Endowment for Democracy. It doesn't take an in-depth analysis to figure out that such 'development aid' is specifically designed to buttress support for the free enterprise system and bring South Africa into the western capitalist camp.

³²"Communist Influence in South Africa," State Department Report to Congress, in *Transformation* 3, (1987), pp.90-99. The report concentrates on the influence of the SACP within the broad ANC/SACP alliance structures. It is indicative of the ideological predisposition of the Reagan administration that the report assumes that the SACP represented a distinct 'radical' threat to the realization of a deracialized capitalism. What the authors ignore is that the logic of the SACP's own strategic formulations were in no way fundamentally opposed to the short-term acceptance of a deracialized capitalism. No doubt the authors saw the SACP as a potential Trojan horse, waiting for the right time to spring the second stage of socialism on unsuspecting 'moderates'. What they did seem to grasp though, as opposed to SACP theorists, is that the very process of instituting a deracialized capitalism would substantially undermine any potential foundation for a second socialist stage.

During the mid-late 1980's there was the tendency among academic observers of South Africa and the ANC/SACP to misinterpret the logic of ANC/SACP liberation theory and practical strategy. This also led to underplaying the effect of the influence of western governments and monopoly capital on the ANC/SACP's strategic path. A good example is the article by Robert Fatton, "The Reagan Foreign Policy Toward South Africa: The Ideology of the New Cold War," *African Studies Review* 27, No.1 (March, 1984), pp.57-82. After correctly identifying the ideological character of the Reagan administration and its specific application to the South African situation, Fatton concludes that the ANC/SACP would resist such cooptation and proceed to a seizure of power. Although the article was written before the post-uprising period, the inherent assumption in Fatton's analysis was that the ANC/SACP's strategic path was umbilically bound to a national liberation which would deliver radical political and economic transformation. Like many academic analyses of national liberation movements in the last four decades, Fatton allows his hopes to cloud clear analytical vision. The unfortunate result has been an endless stream of academic disillusionment the results of which continue to seriously impair contemporary radical scholarship.

³³Cited in Lodge & Nasson (1991), p.188.

³⁴Mac Maharaj, "Internal Determinants of Pretoria's Present Foreign Policy," Paper presented to Seminar in Memory of Aquino de Braganca and Ruth First (Centro de Estudos Africanos, Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, Maputo, Mozambique, January 21-22, 1988), p.16.

³⁵See V.I. Lenin, *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (New York: International Publishers, 1939). Lenin sets out a particular definition of imperialism as a 'special' and 'highest' stage of capitalist development. Although Lenin's definition of imperialism is limited by considerations of time and space, I would argue that the fundamental features that he laid out are still relevant to any understanding of contemporary capitalism and global politics.

³⁶The specific contemporary manifestation of this can be seen in the activities of the IMF and the World Bank, both representing the combined interests of monopoly capital and western capitalist states. See Padayachee (1988); and Bond (1992).

³⁷For a full history of actions by the United Nations see Elizabeth Schimdt, "United Nations Sanctions and South Africa: Lessons from the Case of Southern Rhodesia," United Nations Centre Against Apartheid, Notes and Documents (New York: United Nations, February, 1987).

³⁸One former member of the British AAM has pointed to the effect that the ANC/SACP's historically close ties with European liberals had on the organization. For example, the ANC/SACP became enamored with the social welfare state as practiced in Sweden (one of the ANC/SACP's closet western allies). Such influence no doubt had a profound impact on subsequent economic formulations and ideas of radical economic transformation (interview with author, November 1992 - the interviewee preferred to remain anonymous).

The extent to which the sanctions campaign of the ANC/SACP was internationally supported was exhibited at the December, 1987 ANC/SACP Conference in Arusha, Tanzania entitled 'People's of the World United Against Apartheid for a Democratic South Africa'. The Conference drew hundreds of government and non-governmental delegates. Representation ranged from the government of Cuba to western religious organizations [See ANC, "Documents of the ANC Conference 'People's of the World United Against Apartheid for a Democratic South Africa'," 1-4 December, 1987 (Lusaka, pamphlet)].

³⁹For extensive statistical information on the 'success' of disinvestment see Africa Research Centre, *The Sanctions Weapon* (Cape Town: Buchu Books, 1989), pp.99-104; and *S.A. Barometer* 2, No.15 (August 12, 1988).

In the case of UN anti-apartheid efforts, all measures depended on the individual adherence of member states. The apartheid state was quite successful in getting around the trade and arms boycotts that were applied since there were many nations willing to do business under the table. Some of the major 'offenders' were the United States, Israel, Britain, and Japan. Likewise, many corporations succeeded in circumventing the full effects of disinvestment by setting up subsidiaries and using third parties as investment conduits. For a discussion on some of the efforts of the apartheid state to respond to the sanctions campaign see Robert Davies, "After Cuito Cuanavale: The new regional conjuncture and the sanctions question," in Orkin (1989), pp.204-206.

The United States anti-apartheid movement was able to put enough pressure on the United States Congress to pass a Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act (CAAA) in September, 1986 (over President Reagan's veto). The CAAA measures were generally limited to trade and investment sanctions, and even the ban on new loans had little effect since international finance capital had already refused the apartheid state access to most loan facilities.

⁴⁰Certainly, this was not the case with all anti-apartheid activists. However, like many in the development aid field, these 'professional' anti-apartheid "activists'" sustenance was (is) dependent on the perpetuation of the effects of imperialism. Indeed, many of these same anti-apartheid crusaders have gone on to any number of Third World 'problems' after the demise of western anti-apartheid activities.

⁴¹Edward Kennedy, "The Sanctions Are Working," *Washington Post*, October 16, 1987. At the time Kennedy was writing his article, he was still considering a run for the Democratic Presidential nomination. Kennedy had earlier visited South Africa at the invitation of the UDF, causing widespread protest by AZAPO. AZAPO was subsequently condemned by charterist activists for engaging in 'unrealistic' militant activity.

⁴²ANC, "Sanctions Will Help Defeat Apartheid," ANC booklet (London, 1986).

⁴³I am not implying here that the mass struggles waged inside the country combined with the symbolic impact of MK activity played no role in creating such a parlous state of affairs. My main point though, is that the decisions by international finance were predominantly based on hard economic considerations, not because of the ANC/SACP's sanctions campaign.

⁴⁴Neva Makgetla, "Why We Call For Sanctions," *Sechaba* (September, 1985).

⁴⁵ANC, "Sanctions Will Help Defeat Apartheid."

⁴⁶See "South Africa's Debt Crisis," A background paper prepared for the No Debt Rescheduling Campaign by End Loans to Southern Africa (ELTSA), (London, April, 1989), pp.4-6. ELTSA was part of the European anti-apartheid movement and this paper, along with many others, were part of a no debt rescheduling campaign held under the aegis of the ANC/SACP, which took place in mid-1989 in London.

⁴⁷Keith Ovenden & Tony Cole, *Apartheid and International Finance: A Program For Change* (Victoria: Penguin Books, 1989), pp.188-190. This book represents the popular version of a study which was initiated at the Commonwealth heads of government meeting in Vancouver in October, 1987. It was later endorsed by the Commonwealth Committee of Foreign Ministers on Southern Africa, as well as the ANC/SACP delegation.

⁴⁸There are very few academic analyses which have focused on any kind of alliance arising out of the sanctions campaign and the subsequent effect on the ANC/SACP's strategic and ideological approach.

The vast majority of studies on sanctions and South Africa have either focused their attention on the potential effect on the apartheid state and the means by which sanctions could be made more effective, or on the political and economic efficacy of sanctions.

There is at least one attempt to make the argument that the ANC/SACP's financial sanctions campaign led to an overt ideological and strategic alliance with international finance capital [See Paul Trewhela, "Financial Sanctions and the future of South Africa," *Searchlight South Africa*, No.4 (February, 1990), pp.13-32]. Trewhela convincingly shows that the ANC/SACP's approach to their sanctions campaign was at best naive, and led to common ground with western governments and international finance capital as well as the sidelining of any leading role for the black working class in South Africa. For a firm rebuttal to Trewhela's arguments see Patrick Bond, "Letter to the Editor," *Searchlight South Africa*, No.5 (July, 1990).

⁴⁹Ibid., p.204.

⁵⁰Jeremy Cronin, interview with author, October 1992.

⁵¹In an unpublished paper entitled "The Politics of Financial Sanctions" (1990), Patrick Bond points to the political lessons to be learned from the "shocking October 1989 debt rescheduling." According to Bond, the experience "should teach the movement important lessons about its own position within global financial power relations" (p.1). Bond goes on to argue that the movement should continue a financial sanctions campaign, based on global grassroots politics, to maintain "sufficient pressure on Pretoria to force conclusive negotiations with the ANC" (p.3).

While Bond's conclusions about the lessons to be learned from dealing with international finance capital are right on target, his suggestion that continued financial sanctions would have been one of the 'movement's' strongest weapons to force negotiations only serves to confirm the over-emphasis on sanctions as a central political strategy of a liberation movement. While a grassroots-led sanctions campaign would no doubt have been much more empowering to those who suffer under the policies of international finance capital, the major focus of achieving genuine liberation should surely be on building internal political organization that is led by, and answerable to, the 'broad mass'. The 'movement' would have been in a much stronger long-term position to tackle international finance capital had it adopted such a focus from the beginning.

For a perspective that argues against sanctions from an eclectic Marxist angle see H.W. Vilakazi, "Social Science and the Disinvestment Controversy," paper presented to the Centre for African Studies Seminar, University of Cape Town, 29 May, 1985.

⁵²Seasoned and sympathetic ANC/SACP academic observers such as Tom Lodge have recognized that the organization had lost control of the financial sanctions campaign. Lodge has stated that "financial sanctions really wasn't an initiative of the ANC as such." In addition, Lodge makes an observation that implicitly supports my arguments concerning the power and agenda of international finance capital. He states that there was "no perception among ANC leadership before 1990 of the

complexities of international business dealings and the international economy" (Tom Lodge, interview with author, October 1992).

⁵³Neville Alexander, interview with author, June 1992.

⁵⁴The SACP continued to talk about the leading role of the working class in the pages of their journal *Umsebenzi*. For example in *Umsebenzi* 6, No.1 (1st Quarter, 1990), under the heading "No Let-up On Sanctions" the SACP stated that "the most reliable motive (for supporting sanctions) is class solidarity based on common interests as members of an exploited class. Socialists regard this as a cardinal principal of working class politics" (p.20). That such working class politics were virtually non-existent in the sanctions campaign was testimony to the degree to which it had become the property of anti-working class forces.

⁵⁵Cited in Africa Research Centre (1989), p.98.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, pp.37-38.

⁵⁷Quoted in Holland (1989), p.230. Such a comment serves to confirm that for the ANC/SACP leadership, the united front strategy was paramount. What it also confirms is that SACP members of the leadership perceived the alliances made as short-term tactics which would not fundamentally undermine the longer-term strategy of a radical transformation (consistent with the two-stage theory of revolution). As will be discussed in the conclusion, this perspective ignores the process within which these tactical alliances take place.

⁵⁸"ANC leader pushes for lasting peace," *The Guardian* (UK), January 26, 1990. The article contains the full text of Mandela's letter.

⁵⁹"The Path To Power," *Umsebenzi* 5, No.2 (Second Quarter, 1989), pp.11-12.

⁶⁰This was something that the SACP leadership had been doing for decades (i.e. having a radical line of uncompromising seizure of power for the 'masses', and practically following another line that logically led to a very different outcome). While the seizure of power language used by the SACP was definitely out of step with the reality on the 'ground', this does not mean that rank-and-file cadres were merely playing with words. Many still genuinely held to the belief that the armed overthrow of the apartheid state was the only way to achieve liberation. That they continued to do so is testimony to both their own commitment to radical transformation and the leadership's unwillingness to face up to strategic reality (partly a product of the way in which they had conducted the struggle).

⁶¹The Harare Declaration had been drawn up by the ANC/SACP and first submitted to a summit of Heads of State of the African Frontline States in Lusaka on August 10, 1989. After having been unanimously adopted there, it was then tabled and adopted at a conference of Heads of State of the Organization of African Unity's Ad-Hoc Committee on Southern Africa in Harare on August 21, 1989.

⁶²See Raymond Louw ed., *Four Days in Lusaka* (Johannesburg: Five Freedoms Forum, 1989). The conference, which took place in Lusaka, was attended by over 100 leading (mostly white) academics, business people, journalists, politicians, students and 'developmentalists' alongside the cream of the ANC and SACP leadership.

⁶³See "Nothing less than the Transfer of Power, *New Era* 4, No.3 (October, 1989). The article is in the form of an interview with an internal leader of the Mass Democratic Movement (an outgrowth of the UDF and trade unions), Cheryl Carolus. Carolus was also a leading member of the internal SACP.

Trade union leaders, having accepted that negotiations were now going to be the route to national liberation, put their own imprint on the demands of this new struggle. Thus, NUMSA leader Moses Mayekiso argued:

Negotiations are not a game of chess. They are part of a struggle for power. We cannot let the balance of power be in favor of De Klerk (the new President) and his allies. It must be in favor of the masses [Cited in Ben Turok ed., *Witness from the Frontline* (London: Institute for African Alternatives, 1990), p.104].

⁶⁴*The Independent* (UK), January 19, 1990.

⁶⁵The seven were all members of the 1950's generation who had been imprisoned in the early 1960's along with Mandela. Included amongst the released leaders was Walter Sisulu who quickly reassumed his formal leadership status, paying a visit to Lusaka in early 1990 where he reportedly was appalled at the state of the external organization. Although there is no official record of what Sisulu said to the leadership in Lusaka, it seems likely from information garnered by the author that Sisulu was outraged at the lack of discipline and the financial state of organization, as well as concerned about the morale and well-being of MK cadres.

CHAPTER 7
RETURNING HOME: THE STRATEGY AND PRACTICE OF NEGOTIATIONS
(1990-1993)

In general, social reforms can never be brought about by the weakness of the strong; they must and will be called to life by the strength of the weak.'

Karl Marx

When the all-white Parliament opened on February 2, 1990 crowds of demonstrators gathered outside, as they had always done, carrying banners of the opposition organizations and chanting slogans about the illegitimacy of yet another sitting of the apartheid government. Even though there was a new sense of confidence that De Klerk was being forced to retreat from the bad old days of the 1980's, everyone anticipated another Presidential speech rationalizing the political *status quo*. While the ANC/SACP and its internal allies had for some time been vigorously pushing for the beginning of negotiations their historical experience of struggle was such that it only seemed natural to rule out strategically astute action by the apartheid state: surely it would take a few more pushes, a bit more international pressure to force the oppressors' hand, and when that time came it would surely be on the terms of the oppressed.

What the demonstrators outside Parliament and the externalized ANC/SACP had not fully considered though, was the political wile of De Klerk and the fact that he was in a much stronger position than they might have thought. In truth, the ANC/SACP (and many of its followers) had allowed

themselves to be lulled by their own sense of moral authority. While rightfully claiming that the bitter and heroic struggles waged had made it impossible for the apartheid state to "rule in the old way," the corresponding reality was that the ANC/SACP had itself arrived at a strategic cul-de-sac: and De Klerk knew it.²

Having failed to overthrow the apartheid state by force, an objective severely constrained by the ANC/SACP's strategic approach to revolutionary armed struggle, the organization had chosen to revert to its historical politics of pressure. From 1986 onwards those pressures coalesced into an increasingly strident demand for a negotiated settlement. While the ANC/SACP maintained its stated emphasis on continued armed struggle and developing a revolutionary underground, the reality was that international pressure and internal mass action became the main pillars of struggle. The ANC/SACP might have been at the apex of its international and domestic moral authority, but in the harsh world of *realpolitik* it was now backed into a corner: it had put most of its cards on the table. F.W. De Klerk, still possessing an array of playable cards, was left holding a strong hand and his first play on February 2nd was to call the ANC/SACP's bluff.

The Fetishization of Talks

De Klerk's parliamentary speech of February 2nd, 1990 was a master stroke. Citing the changes in the USSR and Eastern Europe, as well as the reduced threat of the liberation movements to "internal security" and their "new approach," De Klerk declared that "the season of violence is over" and the time had come for "reconstruction and reconciliation."³ From now on, the ANC, SACP, PAC and a host of other allied organizations were free to operate inside the country (Mandela would also be released shortly). De Klerk then went on to outline the government's agenda for a post-apartheid South Africa, stressing the need to protect

minority rights, release the dynamism of market forces, encourage foreign investment, and create a peaceful and stable environment for economic and political development. Describing the aims of the government as "acceptable to all reasonable South Africans," De Klerk carefully laid out his response to the ANC/SACP's demands:

Among other things, those aims include a new, democratic constitution; universal franchise; no domination; equality before an independent judiciary; the protection of minority as well as individual rights; freedom of religion; a sound economy based on proven economic principles and private enterprise; dynamic programmes directed at better education, health services, housing and social conditions for all.⁴

In one short speech De Klerk had seized the strategic initiative.⁵ By unbanning the liberation movements, releasing Mandela, and rhetorically conceding the resistance's more important demands, De Klerk put himself (and the state) in a position to control the negotiated transition to a post-apartheid dispensation. With control of the transition the interests and long-term domination of the existing white capitalist ruling class would be assured.⁶ The continued existence of a still powerful coercive security apparatus in the hands of the apartheid state would act as the ultimate guarantor of an outcome favorable to the white capitalist ruling class.

For the ANC/SACP February 2nd, although unexpected, was a godsend. The organization's choice to put a negotiated settlement at the forefront of the liberation struggle had left it with little alternative but to look for a mutual commitment by De Klerk. Immediately after the release of Mandela on February 11th, the ANC/SACP and its internal allies moved to take De Klerk up on his offer. An internal headquarters was set up in Johannesburg and an 'Interim Leadership Group' consisting of Mandela and other internal leaders (mainly UDF) was constituted.⁷ Although the ANC/SACP stressed that "all forms of struggle" would remain in place

and that "the people" needed to continue "struggling," the initial actions of the organization seemed to confirm that talking was going to be the number one priority.⁸

The first 'negotiations' took the form of a series of personal meetings between De Klerk and Mandela, a trend that was to continue throughout the negotiation process. At the same time, the external leadership was consumed with the task of preparing their own return for impending talks with the De Klerk government. While the ANC/SACP was preoccupied with talks and organizational matters, its supporters were being subjected to a torrent of violence from several quarters: in the bantustan of Bophutatswana ANC/SACP supporters were detained and harassed; in Gatsha Buthelezi's Kwa-Zulu bantustan violent clashes between supporters of Inkata and the ANC/SACP/UDF (raging since 1986), increased in their intensity and brutality; and violent attacks on actual or potential ANC/SACP supporters in the townships around Johannesburg took place, often perpetrated by Inkata-aligned hostel dwellers and abetted by the state security forces.⁹ The mass base of the ANC/SACP began to appeal to the organization and its leadership for support against what they clearly saw as a conscious attempt by the apartheid state to weaken and intimidate the organization's grassroots support base. Seemingly undeterred by the scale and character of the violence, the ANC/SACP leadership continued with their plans for bilateral discussions with the government, Mandela assuring the faithful that De Klerk was 'a man of integrity' who could be trusted.

The violence and the ANC/SACP's response was an important barometer for several reasons: it highlighted the historical failure of the ANC/SACP's struggle to substantively weaken the apartheid security forces, and thus have the capacity to unconditionally demand, from the very beginning of the negotiations process, their effective restructuring and political neutralization¹⁰; it gave indication that the ANC/SACP were unable to physically

protect their mass constituency, having to increasingly rely on state security forces; it revealed that the ANC/SACP leadership felt it necessary, for both objective and subjective reasons, to ultimately rely on talks as the strategic locus for solving problems and achieving power; and lastly, it showed the gap between mass expectations created by the character of the ANC/SACP's liberation struggle and the organization's ability and willingness to meet those expectations.¹¹

Without an effective response from the ANC/SACP, the violence served to encourage much of the youth to once again take matters into their own hands, and to foment opposition to the nascent negotiations process. Even though this early violence and the subsequent actions taken by the ANC/SACP have not received a great deal of analysis, it was clear that the only way in which certain of the ANC/SACP and allied MDM leadership could hope to control their own constituencies, marginalize troublesome 'radicals', and realize their vision of a 'national democracy' was through pushing ahead with a negotiated settlement. By successfully propagandizing the idea that negotiations were the only real strategic option and the guarantor of 'peace and security,' those leaders could continue to claim a popular mandate and ensure an accommodationist politics that melded with the chosen strategic path.

The degree to which such a specific perspective was wholly dominant amongst top movement leadership is debatable, but the clearly dominant strategic approach to liberation struggle (consummated by an uneven negotiated terrain) already enshrined by the ANC/SACP certainly lent itself to this kind of politics.¹²

It is instructive to revisit the question of class in respect to most of the ANC/SACP leadership¹³ and what this meant in terms of the negotiated transition strategies being pursued. Whether or not the majority of the leadership were, in 1990, materially located within the petite bourgeoisie

class, the politics they practiced certainly reflected a petite bourgeoisie mentality. As has been made clear in this study, this meant a politics in which strategic access to existing institutionalized political and economic power was pursued regardless of the tactics utilized to gain access. As past ANC President Dr. Xuma had made clear, the political agenda of petite bourgeoisie leadership was not to conduct struggle in order to fundamentally transform capitalism, but rather to "fight and struggle to get our full share and benefit from the system."¹⁴

Many critics of ANC/SACP policies and specifically the decision to enter into negotiations have pointed to the class composition of leadership as a primary factor. One of the most lucid critics, Neville Alexander, makes the following observation:

I believe that there is a certain historical movement that has to take place and to a certain extent the ANC has gotten trapped in that historical stream. Because of its mass legitimacy and the fact that the Government is willing to talk with them, the ANC will have to do the talking for the people - it could have been the PAC in 1960. The fundamental reason for this is because the ANC is a petite bourgeoisie led movement. The ANC has no commitment to the armed overthrow of the state and as such the context for negotiations are very different from what they would be if the movement talking was one led by socialists/the working class.

While the violence continued unabated, ANC/SACP and government delegations met for the first time in Cape Town on May 4th. Billed as 'talks about talks', the meeting produced the Groote Schuur Minute (see Appendix E) which rather vaguely addressed some of the demands raised by the Harare Declaration. Stating that "the government and the ANC agree on a common commitment towards the resolution of the existing climate of violence and intimidation from whatever quarter," the Minute sought to create a stable and "peaceful process of negotiations." The rest of the document briefly

dealt with the issues of political prisoners, immunity for opposition leaders and activists, and the lifting of the State of Emergency; a working group would be established to make respective recommendations. It was agreed that the government and the ANC/SACP would meet again soon and "the objectives contained in this minute should be achieved as early as possible."¹⁵

As the first formal meeting between the government and the ANC/SACP, the Groote Schuur talks were notable for the context in which they took place and the limited content of the subsequent 'minute'. Although the Harare Declaration had set out demands for a "climate conducive to negotiations," it was already obvious that the ANC/SACP were committed to abandoning their decades-long external base and entering into negotiations. When the delegations met in Cape Town the ANC/SACP, despite potential threats to return to the armed struggle, had no real alternative to a strategy of negotiations. The Groote Schuur Minute reflected the weakness of the ANC/SACP because it was now having to play by an entirely different set of rules over which the organization had extremely limited leverage. In effect, the ANC/SACP's demands were more like pleas to the apartheid state to play fairly, and De Klerk had the ability to set the broad rules of the game. To the ANC/SACP supporter on the ground, the Groote Schuur Minute gave little indication that their organization was dealing with the apartheid state from a position of strength and would deliver a liberation which reflected the demands of their own struggles.¹⁶

After the Cape Town talks Mandela and the exiled leadership began to assert their dominance over the organization and its allies. The UDF/MDM was essentially absorbed into the ANC/SACP, and COSATU now became the third partner in the formally constituted Tripartite Alliance (hereafter referred to as the Alliance). COSATU's overt political allegiance to the ANC/SACP was an indication of the success of 'charterism' amongst the worker leadership,

and gave the ANC/SACP a well-organized and powerful ally. COSATU's presence in the Alliance also brought specific working class concerns and a strong worker sentiment for socialism to the forefront of the political arena, and in the context of a negotiated transition to liberation this was to prove a source of considerable tension within an Alliance dedicated to 'national democracy'.¹⁷

In between the Groote Schuur talks and the next scheduled meeting with the government in Pretoria, set for August 6th, the ANC/SACP focused most of their attention and energy on administrative problems, while Mandela set off on the first of many foreign trips. As the international symbol of the South African liberation struggle, Mandela was feted as a hero wherever he went and was able to secure considerable pledges of financial assistance from government and corporate sources.¹⁸ In the United States Mandela wooed business leaders with his pledge to respect free enterprise, and reacted positively to a plan put forward by President of the Rockefeller Foundation, Peter Goldmark, for the establishment of a development bank funded by foreign investment.¹⁹ What was particularly interesting about Mandela's positive response to the idea of a development bank "modeled on the Marshall Plan,"²⁰ was that he had derided the Marshall Plan in a 1958 article as allowing the United States to gain "control of the economies of European countries and reducing them to a position analogous to that of dependencies"²¹: times had changed.

Mandela also began to give signals that the ANC/SACP was not wedded to a policy of nationalization, again in direct contradiction to his statement only two months previously that "the nationalization of the mines, the financial institutions and monopoly industries is the fundamental policy of the ANC and it is inconceivable that we will ever change this policy."²² As if to confirm the Alliance's change of heart Mandela (along with leading COSATU official and SACP member Chris Dlamini) had a cordial

meeting with the AFL-CIO at its African-American Labor Center, a body previously denounced by the SACP as a front for the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Mandela went out of his way to assure his hosts that "state participation will not be an option if there are better options."²³ ANC/SACP international affairs supremo Thabo Mbeki hailed Mandela's tour as an unqualified "success," arguing that it showed western governments had accepted the central role of the ANC in a future South Africa. Resisting the charge that this acceptance was a result of the ANC's changed stance on economic policies, Mbeki argued that it was a direct result of the ANC's own strength and renewed visibility (a completely undialectical argument).²⁴

However much the ANC/SACP wanted to be seen by its mass base as committed to delivering substantive transformation through the negotiations process, and however much it claimed that its placation of western capitalism was tactical maneuvering, it was being pulled along by its unidimensional negotiations strategy. This was further catalyzed by the delegitimization of socialist policies (associated with the collapsed economies of the USSR and Eastern Europe), and the accompanying demoralization being experienced by Alliance socialists.²⁵ While there were certainly those in the movement angered by the apparent abandonment of long-held principles and policies (nowhere more so than amongst much of the youth and working class), there was the accompanying feeling that there was no alternative to a negotiated settlement entailing compromise. This sense of semi-fatalism combined with the ANC/SACP's general lack of attention to grassroots organization and mobilization did not bode well for a transformative liberation.

Returning to South Africa as a President-in-waiting²⁶, Mandela led an ANC/SACP delegation to the next round of talks with the government in Pretoria on August 6th. The resulting Pretoria Minute (see Appendix F), reiterated the

respective parties' commitment "to promote and expedite the normalization and stabilization of the situation in line with the spirit of mutual trust obtaining among the leaders involved." It was agreed that the release of all political prisoners would be expedited by no later than April 30, 1991, that security legislation would undergo continuous "review," and that "additional mechanisms of communication...should be developed at local, regional, and national levels." While these 'agreements' represented a continuation of the efforts begun at the Groote Schuur talks, the Pretoria talks produced a completely unexpected bombshell: the ANC/SACP was unilaterally suspending the armed struggle "in the interest of moving as speedily as possible towards a negotiated peaceful political settlement." With this added provision on the part of the ANC/SACP the Minute concluded that "the way is now open to proceed towards negotiation on a new constitution."

The decision by the ANC/SACP to unilaterally suspend the armed struggle caused understandable confusion among MK cadres and many Alliance supporters²⁷: it was clear that the conditions set down in the Harare Declaration for suspension of armed activities had not been met by the government; was not MK supposed to be the protector of the 'people' who were under constant violent attack by the state security forces and their surrogates?; had not the ANC/SACP leadership continually reiterated that the armed struggle would continue until "a democratically elected government was in power?"²⁸; and above all, had not the leadership consistently promised to 'involve' its mass base in any important decisions so that the negotiations process would not take place 'over the heads of the people'?

For the leadership, the decision reflected a "justified tactical compromise to maintain the momentum towards a negotiated settlement," that gave the ANC/SACP "the moral high ground."²⁹ Even though the leadership stressed that armed struggle was not being totally abandoned, the

possibilities of any return to substantive armed activity, under the conditions of a complete commitment to a 'peaceful negotiated settlement', were extremely limited.

It had long been clear that the 'armed struggle' was not capable of the armed overthrow of the apartheid state. However, its historic importance was in the psychological and symbolic impact on both the state and the 'broad mass'. Now that the 'armed struggle' had been 'suspended', and with no mutual commitment by the De Klerk government, Alliance supporters on the ground were, more than ever, vulnerable to state-sponsored violence and dependent on an uneven negotiations process to deliver on their expectations. The effective abandonment of armed activity only further contributed to the lack of direction and organization amongst the 'broad mass'. MK activity, despite its limited threat to the coercive capacity of the apartheid state, had at least served to provide some sort of pole for the activities of the disparate groupings in the townships. Without even the active presence and experience of MK cadres the 'people' (particularly the youth) were left to their own devices: this contributed further to rank indiscipline and often to anarchic behavior.

The Pretoria Minute confirmed De Klerk's effective control of the negotiations terrain. By giving up its armed activity and continuing to rely on exhortations to De Klerk to accede to its long-standing demands, the ANC/SACP was catalyzing the government's ability to dictate the pace and character of a negotiated settlement. True to past experience, the Pretoria talks were followed by an unprecedented wave of violence, centered around Johannesburg's townships, in which over five hundred people died within a ten-day period.³⁰ This time attacks were directed at township residents in general, many of whom claimed no particular political allegiance, and as before were carried out by people identified as Inkata-aligned hostel dwellers with the alleged connivance of state

security forces.³¹ Not surprisingly, many township dwellers appealed to the ANC/SACP for weapons. In the Phola Park squatter camp on the outskirts of Johannesburg one resident offered this plea to the ANC/SACP leadership:

It will take a long time before we get the money and maybe by that time we would be dead and unable to enjoy the luxuries money can buy. Give us arms please.³²

In what was to become a familiar pattern of response the Alliance leadership pointed to a 'third force'³³ as responsible for stoking the violence; they promised to investigate the violence and take the matter up with the government. When the violence continued unabated MK leaders made calls for the formation of self-defense units in the townships (although MK was officially 'confined to barracks'), and the Alliance leadership adopted a more hard-line attitude against the government and Inkata. The De Klerk government responded by launching its own security crackdown, and although it was ostensibly directed at restoring 'peace and stability', the practical effect was to further harass, intimidate, and eliminate grassroots Alliance leaders and activists. Having no other recourse the ANC/SACP leadership announced the suspension of talks with the government.

With no real alternative strategy to continued negotiations the ANC/SACP's decision represented both an attempt to placate its grassroots base, and put pressure on the De Klerk government to 'create a climate conducive' to further negotiation.

The ANC/SACP leadership had not only placed far too much trust in a strategy of talks which relied heavily on 'trust' and 'integrity', but had also failed to follow their own promises that the negotiations process would be led by the 'people'. Without rooting their chosen negotiating strategy in mass mobilization and struggle (the only other pillar of struggle which the organization was now capable of

fully utilizing), the ANC/SACP ensured that the new terrain would be controlled by De Klerk and that the organization remained stuck in a strategic sterility.

The Strategy of the Zigzag

If you want to safeguard your revolution you deal with the devil if necessary but you deal with the devil with a long spoon. You do it in a zigzag way, if it's necessary to get you to your target we do it.³⁴

ANC NEC member.

By the time of the ANC's National Consultative Conference (14-16 December, 1990), there was growing discontent amongst the organization's supporters over the way in which the leadership had performed.³⁵ In addition to the internal actions of the leadership, Mandela's conduct on his foreign trips had dismayed many international supporters of the South African liberation movement. Hard on the heels of his United States-Europe trip, Mandela paid visits to both Australia and Indonesia. On his visit to Australia Mandela declared that he would not become involved or comment on the Aboriginal question. Aboriginal leaders accused Mandela of "hypocrisy," describing his trip as a "political obscenity" designed to secure funds at the expense of political principles.³⁶

In Indonesia, one of the world's worst human rights violators, Mandela accepted an award and \$10 million donation from the Suharto military dictatorship and refused to speak out against the Indonesian campaign of genocide against East Timor. As in Australia, he was accused of "hypocrisy and opportunism." A spokesperson for the East Timorese resistance movement FRETILIN summed up the feelings of those who had long supported the ANC's struggle:

For years Mandela has asked the world to interfere in the internal affairs of South Africa. The fight for self-determination and freedom from repression

in other countries is no more an "internal matter" than apartheid in South Africa.³⁷

It seemed as though the ANC had all too hastily abandoned its stated internationalist principles in the headlong pursuit for recognition and 'legitimacy' from specific sectors of the 'international community'.

The December Conference clearly revealed that internal discontent was gathering force as well, with rank-and-file delegates chastising the leadership for what they saw as the soft line taken at talks with the government. Particularly harsh criticism was directed at Thabo Mbeki (seen as a consummate negotiator), at the organization's failure to adequately defend its supporters amidst the ongoing violence, and at the leadership's confidential and unilateral decision-making.³⁸

Conference delegates were clearly feeling ambivalent about the ANC's decision to spearhead the 'struggle' with a negotiations strategy. As if in defiance of the new strategic realities of the ANC they declared that "we unanimously rededicate ourselves to the four pillars of our revolutionary strategy, believing that there have been no fundamental changes in the political situation which would require a departure from our strategy." And yet, in the opening resolution on negotiations it was stated that "conference supports and endorses the negotiations strategy outlined in the Harare Declaration."³⁹

The representatives of the ANC's mass base were caught in a strategic quandary: on the one hand they were dissatisfied with a negotiations strategy that had delivered few gains, a leadership that seemed far too accommodative, and an unanswered campaign of violence that had severely weakened the ANC; on the other hand they yearned for a rejuvenated 'four pillars' strategy that would mobilize the 'masses' and force the regime to capitulate to the majority's demands for total liberation.

Whatever the genuine desires of the delegates to put the 'masses' at the forefront of struggle, the ANC's historic macro-strategy of accommodation had long ago made it extremely difficult for mass struggle (including a mass-based underground and armed struggle) to take strategic center stage. The leadership knew that the ANC's commitment to a negotiated settlement with an apartheid capitalist state still in possession of its coercive capacity, meant the liberation movement had accepted the need for a historic compromise; the delegates had yet to fully accept that reality. Once the apartheid capitalist state, as represented by De Klerk, gave mutual indication, the strategic dye was cast. As long as the ANC gave strategic prioritization to a negotiated settlement under these conditions, there could only be 'wars of position'⁴⁰ between the contending forces. The 'battle' would now be over seizing the negotiations initiative and gaining the 'moral high ground'.

In an attempt to regain the initiative, the December conference instructed the leadership to "serve notice on the regime that unless all the obstacles are removed on or before 30th April 1991, the ANC shall consider the suspension of the whole negotiations process." It further declared that the ANC would "engage in a program of mass action, ...create people's defense units, ...remain committed to the strengthening and growth of the people's army MK and the underground, (and that) the existing sanctions campaign should be maintained."⁴¹ While all of these directives reflected the desire of conference delegates to reclaim a certain strategic initiative and strengthen the organization, the reality of the negotiations terrain which the ANC had accepted forced the directives to be pointed in one direction. That direction, as a little noticed conference resolution stated, was that

The ANC's political task is to mobilize the public in mass campaigns to pressure the authorities to fulfill their tasks.⁴²

In other words, the ANC's negotiations-centric strategy ensured that mass struggle would serve the purpose of acting as a pressure valve on the De Klerk government to hold up its end of the compromise bargain. The implications were clear: the ANC would accept the government as an equal partner in the search for a post-apartheid order; an expectant ANC would rely on more enlightened and chastened government security forces to deal with the violence; and, despite any alternative potential, mass struggle would serve to enhance the Alliance's negotiating position (although there might be differences over degrees of emphasis).

Reflecting the resolutions at the December conference the ANC NEC statement of January 8, 1991 stressed the importance of the "mass involvement of the people in the process of negotiations." It went on to issue the April 30th deadline for the government to remove "identified obstacles to the process of negotiating a new constitution," stating that failure to do so would force the ANC to "review the situation." The NEC called for the convening of an "all-party congress" which would discuss the election of a Constituent Assembly (which in turn would draw up the constitution), and establish an "interim government to oversee the process of transition" until a "democratic government" was formed.¹³

Although the government responded positively to the NEC's call for an all-party congress, there was no indication that it was in any hurry to meet the ANC demands. The most noticeable 'response' to the ANC's moves was the January 12th massacre, by 'unidentified men', of thirty-five ANC members and supporters attending a funeral vigil in the township of Sebokeng (on the outskirts of Johannesburg).¹⁴ ANC leadership reacted by repeating their earlier charge of the existence of a 'third force', and accusing the government for once again not creating a climate conducive to negotiations. Mandela met Inkata leader Gatsha Buthelezi and signed an agreement intended to end violence between

their respective organizations, but it was more an act of individualistic diplomacy and had little effect on the ground.

As the seemingly endless violence continued to rage, the ANC embarked on its promised 'mass action' campaign. It held rallies, marches, and stayaways (mainly in the Witwatersrand and Eastern Cape regions), and undertook a signature campaign for the ANC's constituent assembly demands. Most observers, including those within the ANC⁴⁵, were agreed that the 'mass action' was constrained by lack of grassroots organization, effective communication, and a general lack of direction. In addition, it was difficult for the 'masses' to get excited about action aimed at affecting a negotiation process that was far removed from the more immediate local issues that had most often provided the initial impetus for mass struggles. The kind of mass action that took place did not link concrete economic demands with larger political demands aimed at providing empowerment to the 'mass base'.

Criticism also began to emanate from within ANC leadership ranks, predominantly focused on three issues: the organization's failure to fully utilize mass struggle, thus contributing to ANC weakness in dealing with the government; the growing gap between the actions of the leadership and rank-and-file expectations, producing confusion over the direction of the 'struggle'; and the inability of the ANC to protect its members and supporters from ongoing violence.⁴⁶ Reflecting much the same sentiment as that expressed by delegates at the December conference, these internal critics argued that there was the need for "a combination of mass action and negotiations" in order to regain the "strategic initiative."⁴⁷

Coming as it did from movement notables, the strategic effect of such criticism was not to fundamentally challenge the negotiations path of the ANC, but rather to further solidify it. With added emphasis on 'mass action',

negotiations would now succeed where the armed struggle had failed. As an internal ANC discussion paper put it:

Just as in the past we saw the objective of armed seizure of power as the means to effect the transition, negotiations now become a viable method for the transfer of power in the new conditions.⁴⁸

While a rejuvenated campaign of 'mass action' would no doubt give the ANC added clout at the negotiating table and potentially provide 'direction' and 'involvement' for grassroots structures, it could really only possess an inherently narrow strategic utility within the ANC's negotiations framework. In other words, just as De Klerk would eventually have to tighten the rein on his security forces in order to secure legitimacy and deliver his side of the bargain, the ANC would ultimately have to ensure that mass struggle conformed to the unspoken rules of the transition game. Unfortunately for the ANC, the game was being played out on uneven terms.

As the ANC's 'mass action' campaign lurched along and violence showed no signs of dissipating, the April 30th, 1991 deadline for the government to meet the movement's demands loomed larger than ever. It was clear that the government was in no hurry either to stem the violence or convene an all-party congress. De Klerk was gaining much mileage from the perception that it was the ANC which was being obstinate over further negotiations, and the characterization of the violence as 'black-on-black' feuding between the ANC and Inkata. At the same time, it was equally clear that despite its increasingly strident threats to stop all negotiations with the government (contained in a further ultimatum issued in the ANC's "Open Letter" to the government on April 5th and extending the deadline to May 9th⁴⁹), the ANC had no other option but to hold out for a better deal. ANC leaders had already confirmed that negotiations were the only option⁵⁰ and soon after the radical rhetoric of the "Open Letter," Mandela told foreign

diplomats that the ANC would be "flexible" in its ultimatum if there was "a positive reaction" to the demands.⁵¹

The harsh reality was that the Alliance leadership had neither the political will nor the organizational capacity (weakened considerably by the strategic approach to negotiations), to force the hand of De Klerk. On the ground, the 'people' were preoccupied with defending their communities from ongoing violent attacks. In the words of one township dweller, the Alliance's grassroots base was "just afraid," resulting in most "discussion centering around violence when what we need to be talking about and concentrating on is the organization and principles of the ongoing struggle."⁵²

While there might have been certain rogue elements within the state's security and intelligence forces behind specific acts of violence, the overall responsibility was in the hands of state leaders. This transitional violence should be seen as part of a conscious strategy to weaken the 'mass' base of the Alliance through: keeping the ANC/SACP's constituency preoccupied with defending themselves so they could not be 'involved' in what their leadership was doing, i.e. demobilization; intimidation and outright liquidation of key community activists in order to decapitate the popular grassroots structures; using the violence as a carrot or a stick to advance positions at the negotiating table; and consistently reminding the Alliance of the coercive capacity of the state.⁵³ The basic effect of this strategy was to keep the Alliance leadership on the defensive and secure the longer term interests of the dominant classes.

Workers belonging to the most organized Alliance partner, COSATU, were also taken up with defending their communities, severely affecting their ability to direct energies and efforts to organize around workplace demands and larger political issues. It did not help that COSATU had largely ignored the organization and needs of migrant

hostel-dwellers, indirectly contributing to Inkata's success in organizing these alienated hostel-dwellers to participate in violent campaigns against Alliance supporters.⁵⁴ Despite some movement by MK and the SACP to assist in the formation of self-defense units, the main task of the ANC's troubled armed wing had become one of preparing selected cadres for a future post-apartheid army.⁵⁵

As the grassroots fought for survival the 'wars of position' being conducted around the terrain of the on-again, off-again, negotiations process took on the quality of political theater. Throughout the early part of 1991 the ANC had performed so many tortuous flip-flops on the Winnie Mandela trial saga⁵⁶, that even disinterested observers must have been wondering if the organization had completely lost its bearings. During April De Klerk took off on a trip to Europe (quickly followed by Mandela), and in an ironic role reversal it was De Klerk who was feted as anti-apartheid hero. In what should not have been a surprising development, European governments and capital welcomed De Klerk and his calls for dealing the final death blow to an already ailing sanctions campaign. Indeed, events since February 1990 had made the mutual desire (between De Klerk and his hosts) for a deracialized South African capitalism all the more possible. The ANC leadership countered De Klerk's successes by claiming that "... the notion that the weakening on the sanctions front represents a defeat is a lot of nonsense - it is a reflection of the victories we are scoring."⁵⁷ And yet the ANC had certainly not helped its international sanctions cause by purchasing the Shell Oil Company's flagship building in Johannesburg as home for its new administrative headquarters (Shell continued to be a main target of the anti-apartheid movement).⁵⁸ The campaign for hearts and minds had definitely shifted.

At the same time, Alliance leaders were desperately trying to project their organization as being in control of the negotiations process. While they were telling grassroots

supporters to prepare for mass protest and general strikes⁵⁹, they were also telling international capital that a deal was imminent. Thabo Mbeki went so far as to virtually dismiss the existence of any substantive obstacles to realizing the ANC's plan. He told leading businessmen at a conference held in Zimbabwe that the ANC saw "no particular reason why there should not be a new constitution in South Africa by the end of this year."⁶⁰ The conflicting statements even extended to the issue of violence. Not a month after his organization had heaped all sorts of vitriol on De Klerk for being responsible for the violence, Mbeki projected the State President as a man committed to a "non-racial...democratic" South Africa, under siege from a hostile white right.⁶¹ It was no wonder that the ANC was losing the 'battle' for the 'strategic initiative' to De Klerk.

Damn the Torpedoes, Full Speed Ahead

At the beginning of July, 1991 (2-7th) the ANC held its 48th National Conference in Durban.⁶² Over 2000 delegates listened as Mandela opened the conference with the exhortation to get ready for negotiations "sooner rather than later." Accusing the De Klerk government of pursuing a "double agenda," Mandela urged the conference to ensure that ANC strategy and policy would "push the process forward leading to the transfer of power (for) our people."⁶³ Over the next several days delegates engaged in open and often intense debate. Outgoing Secretary-General Alfred Nzo produced a scathing report on the state of the organization, painting a picture of a "re-active" ANC riddled with complacency, confusion, lack of initiative, and confined by "populist rhetoric and clichés."⁶⁴

While it may have sounded as though Nzo was rapping the organization for being out of touch with its mass constituency, I would argue that Nzo (not very popular with the rank and file) was a conduit for a different kind of

message from the leadership. That message was simply that the leadership of the organization wanted to wean the rank and file to accept that rhetoric was finally going to have to match practice. It was now so clear that the leadership had given up any other strategic considerations other than accommodative negotiations; so issuing slogans and statements about armed struggle would just not do. The dialectic of negotiations politics was becoming heavily weighted, and it was not in the 'people's' favor.

Elections for leadership positions produced only one real surprise, the election of former National Union of Mineworkers head, Cyril Ramaphosa as Secretary-General. His election was not expected by many since he was fairly young and had not been in exile. Mandela was elected President-General, Walter Sisulu as Deputy-President. However, the new look 50-member NEC contained many former UDF leaders; so did the more streamlined 27-member National Working Committee (NWC), given the task of overseeing the running of the organization on a full-time basis. Not surprisingly, at least half the membership of both bodies consisted of SACP members.⁶⁵

More important than the composition of the new leadership though, was the strategic synthesis that was reflected in the final resolutions. Although the resolutions covered a complex array of issues that had previously been given little attention (for example - countering state propaganda and increasing the role of women within the organization), the main thrust was to unreservedly commit the ANC to a negotiated settlement. Reiterating much of what had come out of the December conference, the resolutions directed the NEC to implement a program of action to remove all obstacles to negotiations (with special emphasis on violence), and to "draw in as many categories of people and organizations behind the broad goals of non-racialism, non-sexism, and democracy."

While the ANC that emerged from the conference was definitely a more coherent organization, succeeding as it did in pulling together its varied strands behind the chosen negotiations strategy, there was nothing particularly 'new' about what came out of Durban. What the first conference on home territory in three decades represented was the formal return of the ANC to its historical strategic mission. That mission entailed gathering the broadest social coalition to pressure the apartheid state into negotiating the terms of apartheid's demise. Despite the ANC's consistent claims that such a strategy would deliver a genuine 'transfer of power to the people', the ANC's 'battle plan' after almost 80 years of existence looked more like the terms for a mutual surrender.

In its attempt to project itself as an all-inclusive organization the ANC had reverted to propagandizing a non-ideological image. Mandela, echoing Thabo Mbeki's earlier statements, argued that the ANC was a coalition "united solely by our determination to oppose racial oppression... (it) is the only thing that unites us." This meant that "there is no question of ideology as far as the odyssey of the ANC is concerned, because any question approaching ideology would split the organization from top to bottom." "Just like the UDF had done in the 1980's, the ANC was trying to present their 'broad alliance' program as possessing no specific ideological content, and just as that attempt had been distinguished so too was the latest.

The ANC was attempting to separate cause from effect. The fact that a general anti-apartheidism was seen as the glue for organizational viability did not mean that the way in which apartheid was to be removed was devoid of specific ideological considerations. As an example, the ANC's decision to pursue a 'broad alliance' inclusive of domestic and international monopoly capitalism under the historic conditions pertaining in South Africa was not merely a short-term tactical move but a strategic choice rooted in a

specific conception of class power. Similarly the ANC's favoring of a 'mixed-economy' solution to the ravages of apartheid capitalism entails specific ideological choices relating to respective class benefits and empowerment.

The conception of class power that the petite bourgeoisie leadership of the ANC possessed was one of aspiration; i.e. it was defined by that class they aspired to join; the bourgeoisie. Instead of seeing both the objective and subjective possibilities of the struggles of the broad 'mass', they saw the political and economic power of the ruling class (state and capital). Thus, from the beginning the defining logic of the leadership struggle for national liberation was cast as one of accession and aspiration; all within the boundaries of a racialized conception of change.

The logic of the supposedly non-ideological approach of the ANC was clearly revealed in this contribution by Zola Skweyiya of the ANC's Legal Department:

Entrenching the mixed economy in the constitution will provide opportunities for **maintaining and consolidating** the unity of the anti-apartheid forces which has been forged in the anti-apartheid struggle and channel it to the task of national and economic development (my emphasis -DM).⁶⁷

Thus, the "broad alliance" against apartheid was not to be a temporary one, but one that would be "maintained and consolidated" after liberation.⁶⁸ Indeed, the entire strategic trajectory of a negotiated settlement was wrapped in layers of ideological choice.

Not long after the Durban conference the ANC was given a short-lived boost in its 'war of position' against the government by revelations that government security forces had channeled state funds to the Inkata movement.⁶⁹

'Inkatagate,' as it came to be known, forced De Klerk to admit the funding and demote long-time ANC bashers Magnus Malan and Adriaan Vlok (Ministers of Defense and Law & Order respectively). Yet, for all the sensationalism surrounding

the revelations and the undeniable link between the government and Inkata against the ANC, neither De Klerk nor Buthelezi suffered much more than temporary damage. The violence did not significantly diminish, and the signing of a National Peace Accord between De Klerk, Mandela, and Buthelezi in September, 1991 did little to stem the slaughter. Ironically, De Klerk was able to further consolidate his control of the National Party now that two troublesome securocrats had been substantially marginalized. It was a mark of De Klerk's sense of confidence and continued ability to set the pace and character of the transition process that he gave the nod for the unilateral imposition of a new, across-the-board Value Added Tax (VAT)⁷⁰, whose effects would mostly be felt by a black populace already heavily burdened by an ongoing economic crisis.⁷¹

The implementation of VAT proved a wake-up call for the ANC's Alliance partner COSATU. Since February 1990 COSATU's profile in the Alliance had been stunted, partly as a result of independent working class action being severely curtailed by the violence, but also because of COSATU's approach to mass struggle. Following the same general negotiations strategy as the ANC, COSATU had become involved in a parallel negotiating process with capital and the state. After signing the SACCOLA accord, and subsequent 'Laboria Minute' which provided for COSATU's participation in the state's National Manpower Commission (later to evolve into the National Economic Forum), COSATU devoted much of its energies to institutionalizing bargaining agreements between unions, employers, and the state.

One result of this was to curtail mass struggle by the organized working class.⁷² Although COSATU leaders continued to stress (just like ANC leaders) that their own negotiations process was in the interests of their constituency and needed to be 'mass-led,' the reality was that workers often had little say in decisions made in 'tri-

partite' forums. The necessity of seeking common ground with capital and the state for some kind of social contract in the drive to restructure (albeit on a more progressive bent) an ailing South African capitalism, meant that mass struggle by the working class would need to be contained within the parameters of that very negotiating process. Within the broader strategic framework of ongoing political negotiations involving their political representatives, the ANC and SACP, working class demands and struggle would of necessity have to be muted in order for the 'deal' to be delivered.

A classic example of this involved the issue of nationalization. While most workers continued to demand nationalization (particularly of monopoly capital) as a means towards socialization of the means of production³, ANC policy makers were busy trying to convince their "broad alliance" that nationalization was no longer "an ideological attachment" of the organization.⁴

Once VAT had been unilaterally imposed by the state COSATU mobilized an anti-VAT coalition inclusive of its Alliance partners, and called a two-day nationwide strike in protest. The strike, the largest in South African history, succeeded in virtually shutting down the economy. Despite this impressive display of power by organized workers, VAT was not rescinded and high-level talks resumed center stage. The result indicated that as long as mass struggle continued to be strategically confined within a necessarily accommodationist negotiations process, the interests of workers and the 'people' would take a back seat to those of capital and a state intent on preserving as much of the economic status quo as possible.

As the end of 1991 approached, the ANC and the government were making preparations for the convening of an all-party congress. While the ANC could claim that the government had given in to some of its long-standing demands such as the need for an Interim Government of National Unity

(IGNU), the (supposed) disbanding of covert operations, and the repealing of race laws, the truth was that the government had done so on terms and in a time frame determined largely by itself. Despite conferences, endless policy positions, recognition of the 'agenda' of the government and capital, and undeniable popular support, the ANC leadership and that of its Alliance partners had been soundly beaten in their 'war of position' with the De Klerk government. As the South Africa correspondent of the *Independent*, John Carlin, had pointed out:

Mr. Mandela, and the other "moderates" in the ANC leadership took Mr. De Klerk at face value. They believed that the government and the ANC would be equal partners in the voyage to the "New South Africa," that apartheid would go and they, as the natural majority party, would glide into power...In one sense (that) trust was not misplaced. Mr. De Klerk will remove apartheid from the statute books. He will, when it suits him, release the political prisoners.⁷⁵ But this was never the issue; he knew from the day he came to power that this was what had to be done. The real issue was to retain power, to perpetuate white privilege and the economic status quo after apartheid had gone.⁷⁶

The Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA), constituted as the formal gathering of an all-party congress, got underway in late December, 1991. As proceedings began, it was more obvious than ever that the ANC and the SACP were determined to wrap-up the negotiations process as soon as possible.⁷⁷ Mandela now spoke of the need to "develop consensus across the spectrum and of the desire to maximize common purpose amongst South Africans."⁷⁸ The SACP, fresh from its 8th National Congress, declared that negotiations were the "shortest and most peaceful route to the transfer of power to the people."⁷⁹

Although there was a great deal of political posturing between the ANC/SACP leadership and the government at the new talks⁸⁰, the proceedings, which carried on until late May, 1992 clearly indicated that the ANC was prepared to be

increasingly flexible in their desire to implement a 'transfer of power to the people'. It seemed as though everything was negotiable, including protection for minorities, highly decentralized federalism, immediate reincorporation of the 'homelands', as well as majority rule (at least for the short-term).

In their continued desire to capture the moral high ground in pursuit of seizing the negotiations initiative, the ANC leadership opened the floodgates of accommodation. Besides the myriad policy U-turns since February 1990, including those on nationalization and land, the ANC was now ready to: welcome international capital and western governmental involvement in creating a 'democratic' economy³¹, including endorsing IMF and World Bank prescriptions on macro-economic policy³²; categorically rule out armed struggle as an alternative to a negotiated settlement³³; and accept an interim constitution and interim government negotiated within the confines of CODESA.³⁴

All of this was taking place against the background of continuing violence, limited mass action, and an increasingly confident National Party, aided by its victory in the March, 1992 all-white referendum on negotiations. Indeed, De Klerk showed once again why he was such an adept 'general' of the 'war of position'. He had managed to tie up the ANC in months of talks in which the government had conceded little; to get the Alliance to back an all-white referendum which enhanced his party's position and helped create the impression that the real enemy of 'peace and democracy' was the white right; to keep overall control of state machinery; and to consistently side-step responsibility for a campaign of violence that weakened the ANC.

The CODESA talks broke down at the end of May, ostensibly over percentages for the approval of decisions taken by a future constitution-making body.³⁵ The real reason, however, lay with the Alliance leadership's belated

realization that their increasingly alienated mass base needed to be reassured that they were not being sold a half-baked liberation. History was running in circles.

Soon after the deadlock at CODESA the ANC held a National Policy Conference at which delegates decided to issue the government yet another ultimatum. It encompassed most previous demands (e.g. on violence and political prisoners) but was very specific on the installation of an Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU - to be agreed upon by the end of June), and on a freely-elected constituent-making body (by the end of the year). ANC Secretary-General Ramaphosa warned the government that there had to be "firm timetables," and that if the demands were not met the Alliance would embark on "unprecedented mass action."⁸⁶ As had been the case in the past, the government seemed intent on ignoring the 'immediate demands' of the Alliance, preferring to sit tight and wait on more secret high-level meetings to get formal negotiations back on track.

However, on the night of June 17th, 1992 hostel dwellers descended on the squatter settlement of Boipatong (on the outskirts of Johannesburg) and proceeded to slaughter at least forty-five people, wounding many more. There was an immediate outpouring of domestic and international outrage, and ANC supporters demanded that the organization take action against a government they had consistently held responsible for the violence. Mandela was told by angry Boipatong residents that the Alliance leadership was "acting like lambs while the enemy is killing our people."⁸⁷ It was a familiar refrain, and the Alliance leadership knew that they would have to give their mass base some indication of support. An announcement soon followed that the Alliance was suspending all talks with the government.

Activities and events over the next three months, despite opportunities for substantively shifting the

'balance of forces' in favor of the 'people', served to confirm the strategic stranglehold of an accommodative negotiations path. The Alliance began a "rolling mass action" campaign designed to "politically defeat De Klerk," and to ensure that the "people are part of the process of deciding their own futures."⁸⁸ Alliance leaders such as Ronnie Kasrils, who had shown some unease about the negotiations process, saw in the campaign the insurrectionary "possibility of the Leipzig option" in which "we reach the stage where De Klerk is propelled out of the exit gate."⁸⁹ Such sentiments, while understandable given the lack of mass mobilization and involvement since 1990, were soon doused by the harsh reality that Alliance heavyweights continued to see mass struggle as a pressure tactic on a negotiations process to which they were completely committed.

The *Sowetan* newspaper (South Africa's largest 'black' daily paper) reported Cyril Ramaphosa as telling Alliance members that the ANC had "precipitated the talks deadlock...so our people could see we are dealing with an enemy that will not give in easily." Ramaphosa was quoted as saying that "there is no alternative" to CODESA.⁹⁰ Soon afterwards, the ANC leadership reiterated its commitment to negotiations and reassured its minority constituents that the mass action campaign "is not a program of insurrection" aimed at "a forceful overthrow..."⁹¹

The subsequent campaign of "rolling mass action," despite high expectations from Alliance supporters and dire warnings of 'crisis' and 'chaos' from state and capital, bore the stamp of muted pressure.⁹² A nationwide general strike (the planned culmination of the campaign) which had originally been set to last an entire week and which militant workers had argued should be open-ended, ended up as a two-day stayaway after Alliance and business leaders reached a compromise in closed talks. While the strike and accompanying rallies/marches showed that the Alliance had

the capacity to mobilize its militant mass base, they clearly confirmed the primacy of a bounded strategic approach to mass struggle and a dominant politics of accommodation.

Nowhere was this more clearly revealed than in the aftermath of the September 7th, 1992 Bisho massacre in the Ciskei bantustan. Ciskei security forces (commanded by white officers from the South African Defense Force) opened fire on an Alliance march, killing twenty-nine people.⁹³ Alliance supporters, seething after yet another example of what they saw as the government's double agenda, made calls for a complete abandonment of negotiations, and De Klerk warned of a 'civil war' caused by 'extremists' on both sides (i.e. the far left and far right). Mandela went on national television to call for 'calm' and after talking with De Klerk who offered to move forward on the ANC's demands surrounding hostels, political prisoners, and dangerous weapons declared in a highly publicized newspaper interview that the ANC was "ready to co-operate." Mandela went on to paint a picture of a country on the brink of "disaster" where angry youth despised "anything that relates to order," and where "any attitudes of hostility or action which will further damage the economy" must be avoided. He apologized for "errors committed" during the Bisho march and presented mass action as "a peaceful form of channeling the anger of our people," reassuring doubters that "we are not challenging here, not demanding."⁹⁴

Less than two weeks later, on September 28th, 1992 Mandela and De Klerk signed an Accord of Understanding. The government agreed on the need for an interim government to be installed within a specified time frame, to take actions to secure hostels, ban the carrying of dangerous weapons in public, and free all political prisoners within ten days. In return, the ANC undertook to review its mass action campaign and re-enter multi-party talks. The government had yet again conceded little: the specifics of an IGNU would still have

to negotiated and the other undertakings had all been promised before (as it had always turned out, the promises were not kept). For their part, the Alliance leadership felt the need to offer further compromises in order to ensure the 'irreversibility' of the negotiating process and to deliver 'peace and democracy'.

In a repetition of what had taken place in the 1960's and 1980's, the ANC NEC adopted a "Strategic Perspectives" document (see Appendix G) that mirrored the suggestions made in a recent contribution by SACP negotiator Joe Slovo. In an article in the *African Communist* entitled "Negotiations: what room for compromise?," Slovo argued that because of the "balance of forces" in which the government was not "a defeated enemy" and "a revolutionary seizure of power" had not occurred (particular emphasis was placed on the potential disruptive power of the white right), "compromises" were inevitable in order to "create the possibility of a major positive breakthrough." Terming the proposed scenario as one of a "sunset clause" Slovo argued that the Alliance should agree to a time specific power-sharing deal with the government.⁹⁵

Although there ensued heated debate amongst Alliance intellectuals and activists over Slovo's proposals⁹⁶, the subsequent NEC document (issued in late November) left no doubt that the ANC was prepared to share power with the government. As an internal ANC paper stated, "we need to be very honest with our members...what the NEC is advocating for a transitional period is not the same as conventional majority rule."⁹⁷ Still, the NEC continued to insist that even this ultimate of compromises did not fundamentally alter the oft-stated historic strategic mission of the ANC:

The strategic perspective of the ANC is the transfer of power from the white minority regime to the people as a whole. This will usher in a new era characterized by the complete eradication of the system of apartheid, fundamental socio-economic transformation, peace and stability for

all our people. The basic principle underpinning this new order is democratic majority rule (from "Strategic Perspectives" document).

While much of the Alliance's mass base remained understandably confused over this latest of contradictory messages, one thing was crystal clear. The Alliance, in conjunction with capital and the state, would now be able to conclude the oft disrupted march to a deracialized capitalism in a 'new' South Africa' offering something for everybody. Whatever transpired in the resumed private meetings and negotiations after the ANC's offer of power sharing, would now be concerned with working out specific technicalities, trying to bring on board recalcitrant parties, and sidelining, if necessary, those opposed to the deal. The logic of the ANC's strategy was finally being consummated.

NOTES

¹Marx and Engles, *Collected Works*, Vol.6 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1984), p.281. Marx was not referring to reformism per se, but fundamental reform of existing economic and political systems.

²De Klerk and his advisors had made it a point to canvass the international 'community' concerning the status of the ANC/SACP on their trips abroad, and were thus well informed about the intense pressures that the organization faced. He was also fully aware of the organization's internal problems (through infiltrators), and that the armed struggle was in serious trouble, not least because of the complete lack of front-line bases for MK cadres. Finally, De Klerk was cognizant of the ardent desire of the ANC/SACP's old-guard leadership to come to some sort of peaceful negotiated settlement with his government.

³De Klerk could not have known the full effect that the events in Eastern Europe and the USSR had on the ANC/SACP. Besides the obvious loss of military and financial assistance, the collapse of Stalinist 'socialism' was a severe ideological blow to those in the ANC/SACP who had looked to the USSR as the 'model' for transforming South Africa. Whole generations of ANC/SACP cadres had been 'brought up' on a steady diet of Stalinist commandist 'socialism', and when it all disintegrated they were left in an ideological vacuum. The accompanying disillusionment and ideological confusion, combined with the new 'objective conditions' made the ANC/SACP more susceptible than ever to strategic and ideological accommodation.

⁴South African Embassy (London), Media Release: "Address by State President FW De Klerk, at the opening of the Second Session of the Ninth Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, Friday, 2 February 1990."

⁵ANC critic, former chair of the Worker's Organization for Socialist Action, and now a leading member of the newly constituted Worker's List Party, Neville Alexander focuses on the international balance of forces and the class composition of leading elements within the 'Congress Movement' as important to understanding the character and impact of De Klerk's move. He states:

De Klerk's February 1990 speech makes it very clear that they shifted from talking in the ventriloquist mode via their puppets to the negotiation mode involving valid interlocutors who authentically represent the majority current in the liberation movement because of the shift in the global balance of forces in favor of capitalism-

imperialism. In other words, they were emboldened to embark on this course at this time because they realized that what they consider the Congress' moderates, i.e. those in the leadership of the Congress movement who at the very least are not anti-capitalist, would necessarily become dominant in the organization under the new world-historic circumstances. Any negotiations process would, by its very nature, reinforce this structurally induced dynamic. The subsequent demobilization and demilitarization of the Congress Movement, if we abstract from the complexities of inner-party feuds and conflicts for the moment, would seem to have borne out this calculation.

See Neville Alexander, *Some Are More Equal Than Others: Essays on the Transition in South Africa* (Cape Town: Buchu Books, 1993), p.51.

⁶For a more extended argument along these lines see the Introduction in Callinicos (1992). It was clear that De Klerk, unlike his predecessors, understood the need to link the interests of the two main elements of the ruling class (i.e. the white bureaucratic 'apartheid' and 'private capitalist' elements). With such an understanding, De Klerk showed his willingness to ditch the National Party's historic patronage of the Afrikaner working class and to concentrate on appealing to class interests across racial lines. The practical application of this perspective was to develop over the next three years, gradually becoming a sophisticated program of coercion, cooptation and accommodation.

⁷Mandela was soon appointed Deputy-President of the ANC, but effectively became the supreme leader after his release. Other leaders of the Interim Group included UDF notables Popo Molefe, Patrick 'Terror' Lekota, and Raymond Suttner.

The hurriedly set-up headquarters occupied a downtown Johannesburg building owned by a wealthy insurance executive who reportedly gave the ANC/SACP free use of space until they were able to find longer term accommodation. This reliance on domestic liberal capital to finance some of its operations, was later to become a much wider practice for the ANC/SACP (rationalized by referring to such support as voluntary donations).

⁸See "New tactics for new times," *Work In Progress*, No.64 (January/February, 1990), pp.9-11. This article is based on an interview with senior ANC/SACP leader Chris Hani.

⁹Although the police were identified as supporting and encouraging such attacks, there was every indication that elements in the intelligence 'community' and other securocrat-dominated institutions were intricately involved in the campaign of violence. This should have come as no surprise since the 'new situation' provided maximum opportunities for the state to conduct a two-tier strategy of violence and negotiation that would weaken the ANC/SACP on the ground and hopefully at the negotiations table as well.

For details of the extent of the human and physical destruction wreaked by the violence in early 1990 see Institute for Black Research,

The Codesa File: Negotiating a Non-Racial Democracy in South Africa (Durban: Madiba Publishers, 1993), pp.25-26.

¹⁰Unlike comparative negotiated processes in for example, Zimbabwe and El Salvador, the ANC/SACP entered into talks without any substantive weakening or alternative control of the enemy's security forces. MK's ability to check potential abuses of the apartheid security forces was minimal and in any case, the ANC/SACP's strategic approach had greatly undermined the potential capacity for an armed support base able to defend the 'broad mass'. The result was that the ANC/SACP's mass base stood vulnerable to violent repression and coercive manipulation, and the organization had to rely on these same enemy forces to 'control' the violence. Under such conditions the ANC/SACP could not hope to have control of the negotiations process, having to rely instead on threats of mass action to back up demands.

¹¹One of the main effects of the ANC/SACP's armed propaganda campaign and accompanying symbolic appeal of MK heroism, was the development of a mythological perspective of the armed struggle. There was the expectation that MK would be able not only to protect, but also to act as insurance for fundamental transformation of South Africa (at the very least this meant the provision of all basic needs).

¹²Neville Alexander, interview with author, June 1992.

¹³The leading members of the movement elite such as Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu, Joe Modise and Thabo Mbeki had all long ago adopted the framework of accommodationist politics which exemplifies a petite bourgeoisie outlook. It is of less importance to delineate their respective family and class backgrounds as some analysts do, in order to locate the class component of their politics. As Marx pointed out, one of the defining features of a petite bourgeoisie politics is the use of any means (most often leadership of predominantly 'popular' mass formations), to achieve class 'membership' in the next step up in the class hierarchy - the bourgeoisie. What is of central importance is the kinds of politics practiced, and in the case of the leading members of the ANC the politics of accommodation (negotiation) had little to do with the class interests of the majority of South Africans. One final note - the leading members of the SACP (e.g. Joe Slovo and Chris Hani), while generally more 'radical' in their analysis than their counterparts in the ANC, were just as much a part of this petite bourgeoisie politics regardless of what they perceived as their individual politics.

¹⁴See quote at beginning of chap.2.

¹⁵"The Groote Schuur Minute," in ANC Department of Political Education, *The Road To Peace* (Johannesburg: ANC, June, 1990), pp.52-53. Soon after the Groote Schuur talks COSATU along with the National Congress of Trade Unions (NACTU) signed the SACCOLA (South African Employer's Consultative Committee on Labor Affairs) accord on May 7th. The accord was designed to push the state to formally enshrine worker and union rights, something which was partially achieved by the Labor

Relations Amendment Act of 1990. The SACCOLA accord represented the beginning of high-level forums consisting of the trade union movement, the state, and capital ostensibly designed to improve the lot of employed workers and reduce labor conflict. While this was seen as a positive step by many workers, there was (and continues to be) resistance by certain unions to what they perceived as attempts to coopt the organized working class through 'social contracts'.

¹⁶There was substantial opposition to the ANC/SACP negotiations strategy from other resistance groups, including the PAC, AZAPO, and the newly formed Worker's Organization for Socialist Action. For examples of an early critique see *Ibid.*, Section 4.

¹⁷Even though the COSATU leadership were known to be generally supportive of the ANC/SACP negotiations strategy in which COSATU would not be directly involved in talks, many union affiliates and rank-and-file workers were adamant that working class interests be represented more vigorously and independently.

¹⁸The *Wall Street Journal*, June 25, 1990. The article estimated that Mandela had secured over US\$1 million in pledges, mostly from the business sector, in the first few days of his visit to the United States. Although there is no official record of how much money Mandela managed to raise on his United States trip, it certainly ran into the millions.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰"Down to Business," *New York Daily News*, June 23, 1990. Mandela was quoted as saying that "if we have sufficient resources from that institution (the development bank) it is not necessary for us to look at other options."

²¹Nelson Mandela, "A New Menace in Africa," (1958), in *The Struggle is My Life* (1990), pp.74-75.

²²Interview in *The Sunday Telegraph* (UK), April 1, 1990.

²³Paul Trehwela, "The AFL-CIO and the Trade Unions in South Africa," *Searchlight South Africa* 2, No.6 (January, 1991), pp.70-79. Trehwela goes on to detail the anti-progressive agenda of the AFL-CIO and how it has functioned to create unions around the globe subservient to the needs and demands of international capital.

²⁴*Mayibuye*, (July/August, 1990), pp.9-12.

²⁵The impact of the disintegration of USSR and Eastern European 'socialism,' although affecting South African socialists in general, was particularly felt by SACP members who had looked to the Soviet model as the answer. In mid-1990 Joe Slovo penned an essay entitled "Has Socialism Failed" (*African Communist*, 2nd Quarter, 1990, pp. 25-51) in which he argued that what was wrong with Soviet 'socialism' was its lack of democracy. He set out a vision of "democratic socialism" which would

rescue the SACP and socialism in general, placing priority on the acceptance of multi-party politics and democratic accountability.

While Slovo's contribution rightly highlighted the lack of democracy practiced in the USSR/Eastern Europe (albeit after decades of SACP abuse for anyone daring to question the infallibility of Soviet-style 'socialism'), the practical direction it pointed to was one of further accommodation to the interests of capital. This was because there was no accompanying strategic program that could effectively mobilize the working class to immediately challenge a political process that was well on its way to delivering a deracialized capitalism. By insisting on maintaining the two-stage theory of revolution, Slovo and the SACP were contributing to the demoralization and defeat of a working class-led socialist alternative.

²⁶The ANC/SACP was developing an "evolving mode of presidentialism" [Lodge (1983), p.7]. On his return from foreign trips Mandela "would be met by the entire ANC executive lined up at Jan Smuts Airport" (Johannesburg's main airport). This presidentialism was noticeable in the way the leadership jockeyed for position and favor with Mandela, a practice that caused much tension between former external and internal Alliance leaders. It also didn't do much for democratic accountability or efficiency.

²⁷Alexandra Civic Association leader Mzwanele Mayekiso asked, "how can a movement give up the armed struggle when the struggle is not over. We have to negotiate from a position of strength." He went on to say that no one is going to take you seriously if they believe that you cannot deliver on your demands/agenda, and that this has what has happened to the ANC given the policies that it has adopted and the compromises that it has made [Mzwanele Mayekiso, interview with author, October 1991].

²⁸See "No Ceasefire until people's government rules - ANC," *Saturday Star*, 26 May, 1990.

²⁹Barrell (1990), pp.69-70. The desire to claim 'the moral high ground' gave further indication that the ANC/SACP were out to impress upon the international 'community' their 'seriousness' about a 'peaceful negotiated settlement'. In the face of the ongoing violence, questions of 'moral' rightness were not particularly acute for ANC/SACP supporters on the ground.

³⁰Institute for Black Research, *The Codesa File: Negotiating a Non-Racial Democracy in South Africa* (Durban: Madiba Publishers, 1983), p.28.

³¹Even though I use the word 'alleged' it was obvious to anyone living in the townships (and those in contact with them), that the state security forces were, in many cases, instigating attacks or ensuring that attacks went ahead unhindered. The climate of violence, threats of retribution, and the partiality of the police often dissuaded township residents from coming forward with specific information. This, coupled with a media generally sympathetic to De Klerk and his denials of state

involvement ensured that allegations of state security force involvement in the violence remained officially 'unproven.'

As for Gatsha Buthelezi and Inkata, they were intent on expanding their base into the industrial heartland of Witwatersrand and in the process becoming a major national player. Buthelezi had begun to express his dismay at the sidelining of Inkata in the ongoing talks, which he posed in terms of the exclusion of the 'Zulu people'. His manipulation of Zulu ethnicity, aided by having the unquestioned support of the hereditary Zulu King (Goodwill Zwelethini - Buthelezi's cousin), was to become the main program of Inkata in its attempts to consolidate its own national and regional power. It should be noted that since the elections there has been a highly public and bitter split between King Zwelethini and Buthelezi centered with the ANC weighing in on the side of the King.

²²"Squatter plea to ANC for weapons," *The Star*, September 16, 1990.

²³Alliance allegations of a 'third force' were continually dismissed during 1990, until the publication of the state-appointed Harms Commission Report in late 1990. Although the Report did not offer conclusive evidence of direct high-level state complicity in 'covert activities' by state security forces, it did find that the government's Civil Cooperation Bureau (CCB) seemed to be behind a series of death-squad killings and other potential cases of apartheid-related violence. While the Report did not result in any specific action being taken by the De Klerk government, the accumulation of evidence over the next year was to force De Klerk to take steps to rein in elements of his security establishment. In March, 1994 a report emanating from the independent Goldstone Commission fingered high-level officers in the South African police as having participated in gun running to anti-ANC elements, among them Inkata supporters. De Klerk responded by suspending a few top South African Police officers. As of the time of writing the investigation continues.

For further information on CCB activity see Pauw (1992); and Patrick Laurence (1990).

²⁴Raymond Suttner, interview with author, November 1992.

²⁵See "Silence Breeds Dissent," *Financial Mail* (SA), 14 December, 1990.

²⁶"Mandela's Aussie visit 'an obscenity'," *The Star* (SA), October 22, 1990. Aboriginal activist Gary Foley asked the question: "Why do you think he's coming out to Australia? It's not to get a better tan...I think it's a political obscenity for him to be coming here and sucking up to all the people who wouldn't lift a finger for him while he was in jail."

²⁷Celia Mather, "Indonesia issue tarnishes ANC's image," *Weekly Mail*, 17 May, 1991. (Mandela's trip took place in October 1990). The military dictatorship of Suharto came to power in 1966 after the estimated slaughter of over one million Indonesians, many of whom were members of the Communist Party. This slaughter was greatly aided by the activities of the United States CIA. Since 1975 the military

dictatorship has occupied the tiny island of East Timor, in the process wiping out an estimated one third of the inhabitants of East Timor.

³⁸See "ANC's stronger after some tough talking," *Weekly Mail*, 20 December, 1990. The Conference was held in Johannesburg and was attended by more than 1600 delegates, a large portion of whom were under the age of thirty. It represented the first open conference of the ANC in almost 35 years, and the first time the external leadership had to face a representative collection of its internal mass base.

³⁹ANC, *Advance to National Democracy: Report on the ANC National Consultative Conference, 14-16 December, 1990* (Johannesburg: ANC booklet, 1990), pp.16-18.

⁴⁰This originally military term was applied to the field of politics by Gramsci. To use the military analogy, it implies the use of 'trench warfare backed up by reserves of supplies, munitions and soldiers behind the lines' [See David Forgacs ed., *A Gramsci Reader* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1988), pp.430-431]. I would argue that Gramsci's arguments concerning wars of position was predominantly applicable to the 'West' (as opposed to the example of the 'East' - the victorious October 1917 Revolution representing a 'war of maneuver'), due to the complexities and strengths of both the state and civil society.

⁴¹*Advance to National Democracy*, pp.18-20. The conference delegates vigorously rejected proposals by Thabo Mbeki that the ANC review its stance on sanctions. The leadership recognized that the ANC had lost control over the campaign (exemplified by the unilateral decisions by capital and several governments to drop sanctions against the De Klerk government), and their attempt to force a review was too little too late. In any case, the uncritical way in which the entire sanctions campaign had been propagandized by the ANC/SACP wrought its own bitter fruit in the form of delegates' refusal to countenance any rethink.

⁴²*Ibid.*, p.20.

⁴³ANC, "Year of mass action for the transfer of power to the people," Statement of the National Executive Committee on the occasion of the 79th anniversary of the African National Congress, January 8, 1991, (Johannesburg: ANC, 1991).

⁴⁴Institute for Black Research (1993), p.34. There were charges by some of the survivors that the state security forces, which had been asked to protect the vigil, had disappeared minutes before the gunmen arrived. As before, subsequent investigations proved 'inconclusive'.

⁴⁵See *Mayibuye*, March, 1991.

⁴⁶See Ronnie Kasrils and Khuzwayo, "Mass Struggle is the key," *Work in Progress*, No.72 (January/February, 1991); and Raymond Suttner,

"One Year of an Unbanned ANC. The Road Ahead" (ANC, internal Department of Political Education paper, February, 1991)

⁴⁷Kasrils & Khuzwayo (1991), pp.10-11. As a note of interest, Kasrils was still on the run from state authorities at the time as a result of his MK activities in Operation Vula. 'Khuzwayo' is apparently a *nom de plume*.

⁴⁸"Tasks of the ANC in the Present Period," ANC internal discussion document, 1991. Although this document does not indicate a specific author, it is highly likely that it came from the pen of DPE head Raymond Suttner.

⁴⁹For the text of the Open Letter see Institute for Black Research (1993), pp.318-325. The new ultimatum contained the following immediate demands:

- outlawing the carrying of weapons at public gatherings;
- the dismissal of government ministers Adriaan Vlok and Magnus Malan (in control of law and security forces) and all those responsible for covert activities;
- the dismantling of all counter-insurgency units of the security forces;
- the suspension of police officers implicated in township massacres (specifically those in Sebokeng and Daveyton);
- assurance that security forces would employ 'acceptable and civilized' methods of crowd control;
- steps be taken to phase out hostels, and transform them into family units;
- the establishment of an independent commission of inquiry to investigate security force misconduct.

⁵⁰See "We won't review stance on talks, ANC tells AZAPO," *The Star*, 11 March, 1991.

⁵¹"ANC 'flexible' if Govt reacts positively," *The Star*, 10 April, 1991.

⁵²Simon (a pseudonym) - ANC member and township resident in Johannesburg, interview with author, October 1991.

⁵³This strategy has most recently been used in El Salvador, where the liberation movement, the FMLN, has faced many of the same challenges.

⁵⁴For an excellent discussion of the migrant hostel system, worker issues surrounding its 'members', and subsequent violence see Greg Ruiters and Rupert Taylor, "Organise or Die," *Work in Progress*, No.'s 70/71 (November/December, 1990). As the authors point out, the defining feature of the violence was:

...not the ethnic lines of division but that the participants and victims of the violence are those who have been among the most severely exploited and disadvantaged by the apartheid system (p.10).

⁵⁵See "Waiting for the next order," *Mayibuye* 2, No.3 (April, 1991), pp.10-12. The article is an interview with MK commander Chris Hani. During April there was a booklet drawn up by MK entitled "For the Sake of our Lives," that began circulating amongst township activists. It called for the formation of Township Defense Committees and Township Defense Forces, operating along military lines and adapting themselves to the tactical needs of an urban landscape. These formations were to constitute an embryonic "people's army and police." As events over the next year were to confirm, these plans never really took off. While many communities did form self-defense units, they were often ill-equipped and lacked formal command and control structures. MK held its own conference inside South Africa in September, 1991 at which MK leaders were heavily criticized for unilateral decision-making and the confused state of the organization. MK supremo Joe Modise came in for particular criticism, as had been the case in the past. However much the rank-and-file of MK were dissatisfied and disillusioned, the political decisions that the ANC leadership had made and the strategic direction of their involvement in the negotiating process, left MK with little more than a spectator role.

⁵⁶Winnie Mandela had been charged by the state with being an accomplice to the murder of a black teenage activist named Stompie, which, it was alleged, had been carried out by a group of her 'bodyguards' who called themselves the 'Mandela Football Club'. When the trial began the senior ANC leadership, including her husband Nelson Mandela, had been publicly supportive of her although many of the younger leaders (mostly those who had not been in exile) were vocally critical of Winnie's general conduct which they considered undisciplined and irresponsible.

The trial, which dragged on for several months, ended in the acquittal of Winnie, but by that time had divided much of the ANC leadership and general membership and had produced a highly publicized separation between Nelson and Winnie. Many of Winnie Mandela's activities since the trial (e.g. as yet unproven charges of corruption and illegal diamond dealings) continue to raise serious questions concerning her personal and political agenda, but there is little doubt that she still commands considerable (and often zealous) support amongst a sizable portion of South Africans.

⁵⁷"On the Political Agenda," *New Nation*, 3-9 May, 1990, pp.6-7. The article was an interview with Thabo Mbeki.

⁵⁸See "Propping up the fourth pillar of the Struggle," *New African*, Feb. 21, 1991.

⁵⁹See "Torrent of protest looms," *The Star*, 30 April, 1991.

⁶⁰"New Deal soon, hints Mbeki," *The Star*, 24 April, 1991.

⁶¹"On the Political Agenda," p.7. For further analysis of the logic inherent in such a position see David Niddrie, "Using the carrot or the stick," *Work in Progress*, No.75 (June, 1991), pp.6-7.

⁶²The choice of Durban for the ANC's first internal National Conference in over 30 years was intentional. Durban and its surrounding townships constitute the urban heartland of the predominantly Zulu populated Natal province. Gatsha Buthelezi's Inkata movement continued to claim Natal/Kwa-Zulu as its own home turf, a region which it would politically control regardless of the national appeal of the ANC. By holding its conference in the heart of Inkata 'territory' the ANC was sending a message to Buthelezi and the world that Natal and the Zulu people were not the possession of Inkata.

⁶³ANC, *ANC National Conference July 1991. Report* (Johannesburg: ANC Department of Information and Publicity, 1991). All subsequent quotations from the conference deliberations are taken from this source.

⁶⁴See David Brier, "ANC shambles outlined by departing Nzo," *The Star*, 7 July, 1991. One thing that came out of the proceedings was the extent to which the ANC was dependent on foreign funding, particularly from Sweden. Although the official figures were not released one source put the amount pledged by foreign sources at SARands684 million. However, these were pledges and much of the money was yet to come to the ANC and its allies. The ANC could count on receiving the reportedly SARands54 million from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) [See Institute for Black Research, p.38].

⁶⁵Although the SACP had begun to assert itself as an independent organization outside the ANC (e.g. opening new SACP branches and recruiting heavily amongst trade unions), most of its leadership and organizational efforts were still dedicated to the ANC. Indeed, since February 1990, the SACP had resumed much the same role it had played in the late 1940's and early 1950's - putting forward their 'left' version of the 'national democratic revolution' yet remaining solidly within the strategic parameters of the ANC's 'united front' outlook.

⁶⁶As cited in Allister Sparks, "The ANC pulls together," *Africa South*, No.13 (August, 1991), p.8.

⁶⁷In *Sechaba*, June, 1989, p.9.

⁶⁸For an extended discussion of the politics of the mixed economy approach see Jack Lewis, "'Mixed Economy' - Illusions of Reformism,"

paper presented to the Africa Seminar of the Center for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 13 March, 1991.

⁶See *Weekly Mail*, 19 July, 1991. Further revelations pointed to a vast state slush fund for anti-ANC purposes, financing among other things: the military training of Inkata members; the Inkata dominated trade union UWUSA; and Inkata rallies, which were almost inevitably followed by violent attacks on ANC members and supporters.

⁷VAT was designed to institute an across the board 14% tax on all commodity goods and services, a hefty increase from previous taxes. Since it was an anti-progressive tax and encompassed amongst other things, basic foodstuffs and health services, VAT meant that the unemployed and working class would feel the brunt of its impact.

⁸The South African economy registered a negative growth rate in 1991 and unemployment was hovering at around 50%. There had been large scale retrenchments and increasing monopolization of industry, as capital continually sought to mediate the effects of its organic crisis.

⁹COSATU leadership dispute this criticism, arguing that the gains wrought from employers and the state through negotiations would further empower the working class, and set South Africa on the road of economic recovery. While they stressed that to ensure such a process met the interests of the working class there would have to be the continuous 'involvement' of workers' mass struggles, the practical result has been to circumscribe mass struggle in the interests of conciliation and employer/state demands.

There have been many articles written in the last few years encompassing this debate. See for example Karl von Holdt, "Insurrection, Negotiation, and 'War of Position'," *South African Labor Bulletin* 15, No.3 (September, 1990); Geoff Schreiner, "Fossils from the Past," *South African Labour Bulletin*, 16, No.1 (July/August, 1991). For an 'outsiders' perspective which argues for a negotiated program of 'rolling reforms' see John Saul, "South Africa: Between 'Barabbarism' and Structural Reform," *New Left Review*, 188 (1991), pp.3-44.

¹⁰See the South African Commercial and Catering Allied Workers' Union (SACCAWU) input paper "Nationalization and the Role of the State," for COSATU Economic Policy Conference, 27-29 March, 1992 in COSATU, "Documentation: Economic Policy Conference," (Johannesburg: COSATU pamphlet, 1992).

At its National Congress at the end of July, COSATU had reaffirmed its commitment to socialism as the desired goal of struggle. A banner displayed by workers at the conference read: "Freedom Charter No! Socialism Yes!" [See "Resolutions adopted at the COSATU Congress," *Azanian Labour Journal* 4, No.'s 2/3 (October, 1991), pp.11-13].

¹¹"The ANC and the 'N-Word'," *The Star*, 17 September, 1991. In fact, it had been clear since early 1990 that the ANC leadership saw the nationalization issue as a stone around the organization's neck in its bid to secure foreign investment and the support of liberal capital. Also see ANC Department of Economic Policy, "Discussion Document: Nationalization," (Cape Town: Center for Development Studies, n.d.).

Likewise, the ANC had decided that it would not nationalize private land for redistribution to the 'people'. Instead it would use vacant and unused land (including state owned properties like military installations) as well as a Land Claims Court to fulfill the Freedom Charter's promise that 'the land shall be shared among those who work it'. [See ANC, "ANC Position on the Land Question," discussion document for the ANC National Conference (Johannesburg: ANC booklet, March 1991)].

¹⁹Although the release of all political prisoners had been a demand of the Harare Declaration and had continuously been referred to by the ANC leadership as necessary to creating a 'climate conducive to negotiations', there were still many political prisoners languishing in jail. Despite numerous pleas and letters to the leadership from ANC-aligned political prisoners (the author, who visited the Leuwkop prisoners, personally saw several of these letters), particularly from a group in Leuwkop Maximum Security Prison, there continued to be little movement on the issue throughout 1992 and 1993. Although the ANC and the government had signed a Record of Understanding in September, 1992 designed to release all genuine political prisoners, the ultimate power of decision still rested with De Klerk. Meanwhile, the government continued to release prisoners aligned to Inkata and stall on taking any action with regards to ANC aligned prisoners. As for the ANC leadership, they resorted to telling the prisoners to wait until a new government was in place (this was said at an ANC rally in Coronationville, Johannesburg on September 22, 1993 by ANC Regional Chair, Tokyo Sexwale).

²⁰*The Independent* (UK), 24 April, 1991.

²¹Most of the nineteen organizations in attendance represented apartheid capitalism in one form or another. The PAC, AZAPO, and the right-wing Conservative Party refused to participate, as did Buthelezi who refused to be part of a process that did not include the 'Zulu kingdom' in the form of his cousin King Zwelethini (although Inkata was represented by other leaders). Other organizations of the left, including WOSA and the Marxist Workers' Tendency (MWT) of the ANC, criticized CODESA and warned that the ANC and the SACP were in danger of institutionalizing wholesale compromises that would not deliver genuine liberation to the 'masses'.

²²As cited in Institute for Black Research, *The Codesa File: Negotiations for a Non-Racial Democracy in South Africa* (Durban: Madiba Publishers, 1993), p.56.

²³Manifesto of the South African Communist Party, "Building workers' power for democratic change," (Johannesburg; Umsebenzi Publications, January, 1992), p.11. The SACP, following the adoption of its two-stage theory to the 'new' conditions, continued to insist that if the "working class propels this process" (i.e. negotiations), the process would not "fail the working class." Indeed, the SACP seemed to see no contradiction between the negotiations strategy and its accommodative politics, and the ability of the working class to struggle for socialism.

¹⁰There was much made of the tit-for-tat accusations between Mandela and De Klerk at the beginning of the talks (sparked by De Klerk's remarks on the continued existence of MK), but the two were soon shaking hands and back to business. As any seasoned observer was able to see, this bit of political theater was purely designed to gain public relations points since both De Klerk and Mandela knew that MK did not constitute any real threat to their respective agendas.

¹¹See "Mandela urges massive US investment in SA," *The Star*, 6 December, 1991.

¹²See "Introducing Realism," *Business Day*, 24 March, 1992.

¹³"Armed Struggle is over, says Mandela," *The Star*, 20 May, 1992.

¹⁴See ANC, "Year of Democratic Elections for a Constituent Assembly," Statement of the National Executive Committee on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the African National Congress, January 8, 1992 (Johannesburg: ANC booklet), p.12; and "CODESA II; blowing hot, cold and hot," *Mayibuye*, June 1992, p.9.

¹⁵As an indication of how far the ANC negotiators were willing to go to achieve 'consensus', they offered a 70% majority for approval. It was also an indication of the government's arrogance that they did not back down from their insistence on an 80% majority.

¹⁶"ANC threatens turmoil," *The Star*, 1 June, 1992. Ramaphosa was at pains to stress that "time is of the essence," something that ANC leaders had been saying since February, 1990.

¹⁷"Boipatong, the seeds had already been sown for The Crisis," *The Star*, 28 June, 1992.

¹⁸"Countdown to Chaos," *The Star*, 12 July, 1992. The article details extracts from the minutes of an Alliance meeting setting out the program of mass action. It is once more worth noting that the claim by the leadership that mass action would ensure the involvement and primacy of the 'people' in seeing through a 'transfer of power', had been repeated for the last three years almost as a catechism. As has been argued, the reasons for the difference between reality and rhetoric lay in the ultimately uncritical acceptance of an inherently accommodationist strategic path of negotiations.

¹⁹Phillip van Neikerk, "While the generals dither, troops return to the trenches," *Weekly Mail*, 19 June, 1992. The 'Leipzig option' refers to the insurrectionary uprising that took place in Leipzig, Germany during the 1930s. There quickly developed an intense debate in the pages of the *African Communist* over the strategic direction of the Alliance. As part of the debate over expectations raised by the mass action campaign, SACP ideologue Jeremy Cronin had written an article in which he argued that mass action should not be seen either as a 'tap' to be turned on and off or as leading to an insurrectionary seizure of

power. Rather, he argued, mass action should be approached as an ongoing process in which there would be an accumulation of gains made by the 'people' which would undermine De Klerk's agenda and give mass content to ends achieved. [See Jeremy Cronin, "The boat, the tap, and the Leipzig way," *African Communist*, 3rd Quarter, 1992].

³⁰"'No alternative to Codesa' - ANC," *Sowetan*, 6 July, 1992. Ramaphosa later attempted to dispute the remarks, arguing that he had not said there was no alternative to CODESA, but that mass action was the option. Ramaphosa was becoming entangled in his own logic. Clearly, mass action was not seen as an contending 'option' to CODESA since such a perspective would mean relying on mass struggle to deliver a 'transfer of power to the people'.

³¹Phillipa Garson, "ANC 'not insurrectionist'," *Weekly Mail*, 16 July, 1992. The quotes came from an ANC NWC document entitled "Campaign for Peace and Democracy."

³²For a good discussion of the distinctions between mass struggle and mass action and the need to have at least a neutralized control of the security forces see Devan Pillay, "Fighting the Violence: Mass Action or Mass Struggle?," *Work in Progress*, No. 83 (July/August, 1992), pp.7-9. As an unpublished paper by an ANC activist argues:

The weakness in the way the involvement of the masses in negotiations has been posed is that it has focused almost exclusively on the process of consultation and symbolic or demonstrative actions (original emphasis).

In Justice Tumahole, "A Contribution to the Strategic Perspectives Debate," unpublished paper, 1993.

³³See Institute for Black Research (1993), p.107.

³⁴"We must pull SA from the quagmire," *The Star*, 15 September, 1992.

³⁵Joe Slovo, "Negotiations: what room for compromise?," *African Communist*, 3rd Quarter, 1992.

³⁶In the next issue of the *African Communist* (4th Quarter, 1992), several articles appeared that took issue with Slovo, including contributions from hard-line SACP stalwart Harry Gwala, and ANC NEC member Pallo Jordan. While the publication of this debate signaled a welcome openness within the SACP, the 'sunset' strategy became the dominant line thus further reaffirming the SACP's commitment to an even more truncated 'national democratic revolution'. It was not surprising that Gwala and Jordan were unable to seriously contest Slovo's line (which was supported, to varying degrees by other prominent SACP members such as Jeremy Cronin and Raymond Suttner). The reason I say this is that both Gwala and Jordan were 'outsiders' of sorts; Jordan being one of the few 'independent' socialists in the Alliance; and Gwala being considered an unrepentant Stalinist with a tendency to act as a warlord in his Natal homebase. While there was debate in the ANC NEC over the

'sunset' argument, those opposed were very much in the minority. There was also a great deal of expressed opposition from within the organized working class, which was channeled by the leadership into a COSATU initiated 'Reconstruction Accord' which would bind a future government to the provision of social services and hopefully ensure the interests of the working class. (See COSATU, "Reconstruction Accord," 4th Draft - internal Alliance document, 1993)

³Raymond Suttner, "Negotiations - Site of Struggle or Site of Surrender," internal ANC discussion paper, 22 April, 1993.

CHAPTER EIGHT
CONCLUSION: OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES

There is no meaningful alternative to a concrete but transformative project, on the actual capitalist dominated terrain in which we find ourselves.¹

Jeremy Cronin (ANC NEC and SACP CC member), 1994.

The events that took place between the signing of the Accord of Understanding and the installation of the Transitional Executive Council on 23 September, 1993 served to solidify the practice and logic of the ANC's historic strategy of accommodation.

Much as had been the case in previous years, 1993 proved to be a study in how to pursue the idea of 'national unity' at almost any cost. While the by-now commonplace 'political' violence and arrogant power plays by the De Klerk regime showed no signs of dissipating, the ANC leadership displayed a consistent pre-occupation with what were perceived as serious threats to the transitional deal coming from the 'far-right'.² The ANC NEC's annual statement highlighted the rationale for further compromise by pointing to the need to "neutralize dangerous opposition and ... assist in curbing counter-revolution."³ Strategically this meant the prioritization of a negotiated "terrain of struggle" that would gain a measure of democracy, limited by the 'objective conditions' under which it was being pursued, which could then hopefully be radically transformed after the ANC was in power.

This sense that once the ANC had come to possess a degree of power, major 'problem areas' (e.g. monopoly control

of the economy) would be addressed and sorted out, came to represent the 'official' response to the 'unrealistic' expectations of the organization's mass base. What was now argued was that it was impossible to confront such 'problems' at the present; to do so would endanger the negotiations process. Put another way, the very demands that had driven South Africa's struggle for liberation, and which the ANC and SACP had historically taken as their basis for political organization, were no longer viewed as necessary to achieve the transformation of South Africa. All of this was predicated on a specific strategic interpretation of the prevailing 'objective conditions'.

As this study has shown, this kind of perspective is infused with a petite bourgeoisie politics that privileges the power of the dominant class (inclusive of the existing state) over the power of the broad 'mass'. This leads to the struggles of the 'people' being viewed as *ad hoc* requirements to a more important instrumentalist 'structural' access (i.e. control of the form, not the content). The same kind of perspective has been dominant amongst many national liberation movements⁴; the global landscape of post-independence political practice by these movements only confirms the triumph of the narrow sureties of structural access over the fluid possibilities of popular struggle. If we look at the ANC/SACP 'experience' in this way, it becomes clear why predominantly 'structuralist' theories of revolution can only give us a narrow view of people's struggles.

Implicit in such a perspective is a completely undialectical approach to the ways in which political struggle is conducted.⁵ It is as if both the compromises themselves and the grassroots struggles of the majority have no effect beyond their immediate transitional context, that future possibilities are not linked to present and ongoing political (strategic) choices. Looking at the broader historical framework of the ANC and SACP's struggle in which

this perspective was regularly (and situationally) applied, it becomes clear that the practice and logic of subsequent struggle must lend itself to a gradual disempowerment of the 'mass' and ultimately an increasingly truncated 'liberation'. To this end, the ANC leadership continued to place organizational priority on the increasingly closed-door talks in the hope that further deals and guarantees could be penned in order to safeguard the stated aim of a transition to 'democracy'.

The insistence on continuing to place the strategic locus of struggle squarely within the parameters of an ultimately narrow and elite-managed context, catalyzed the growing frustration that was being felt by many of the ANC-led Alliance's own mass constituency. Writing in the pages of the ANC mouthpiece *Mayibuye* in April, an 'ordinary' ANC member posed a searching question:

It seems fitting to ask: Are we going to increasingly see the ANC beat one retreat after another in the face of the intransigence of the extreme right, and, indeed, of the NP itself? The position adopted by the NEC of the ANC...points in the direction of a chain of retreats, although they might be sugared by some rhetoric of victory.⁶

It was while such sentiments were being increasingly and openly expressed by the rank-and-file that the immensely popular leader of the SACP, Chris Hani, was gunned down by a right-wing assassin in April, 1993. The subsequent outpouring of anger and frustration by millions of workers and unemployed provided the Alliance leadership with an unexpected but welcome weapon which they could yield in the negotiations-centric battle for moral supremacy. Once again the leadership channeled the actual and potential militancy of their base constituency into what can only be called stage-managed 'mass action'.⁷

Through such channeling, the Alliance leadership was able to wave the threat of this militancy like a sword of Damocles over the head of De Klerk and the white population

in general. In doing so they sought at least three specific outcomes: to push De Klerk into doing what he had been promising to do for the last three years; to frighten intransigent whites (particularly in the business sector) into accepting the ANC as the best guarantor of 'peace and stability'; and to control the militancy within the movement that itself posed a potential threat to the strategic centrality of accommodative negotiation.

On all three objectives there was enough qualified success to ensure the solidification of the Alliance's chosen strategic path - an all inclusive negotiated settlement culminating in national elections for a government of national unity. Unquestionably though, the price of such 'unity' was high.

Searching for Unity in the Face of Contradiction

Throughout the preceding three decades the dominant theoretical basis for the ANC and SACP's liberation struggle was cast within the necessity for the 'revolutionary seizure of power'. Whether applied to the smashing of apartheid and the attainment of majority rule or as a springboard to a transition to socialism, a 'revolutionary seizure of power' was presented as a necessary pre-condition for movement forward.³ Many liberal and neo-marxist academics, as well as numerous Alliance intellectuals, have historically conceptualized arguments for a 'revolutionary seizure of power' in narrowly statist terms.

Skocpol's structuralist theory of the state is indicative of this approach. The (autonomous) state is given the status of the struggle 'throne'; it leaves revolutionary (purposive) struggle being cast in terms of a fight for the form (structure), not the foundation (unless we want to see the state as the foundation of social processes). If such an approach is adopted, either theoretically or practically, we are then left with a false dichotomy between the political and the economic. Political control of the state can be

achieved with no corresponding transformation of the economic sphere; and we only have to take a quick glance at the contemporary results of most 'Third World' political revolutions to see what kind of national liberation has been delivered. In the historical context of the South African struggle such approaches have provided the basis from which to lend both 'revolutionary' credence to purely political change and ammunition for bourgeois critics of any revolutionary struggle.

There is nothing implicitly statist in any struggle for revolutionary change. What is implicit though, is that there must be a fundamental 'attack' on the entrenched economic and political interests of capital in order for there to be meaningful liberation. As the ANC had put it quite clearly in the 1970's:

It is therefore a fundamental feature of our strategy that victory must embrace more than formal political democracy. To allow the existing economic forces to retain their interests intact is to feed the root of racial supremacy and does not represent even a shadow of liberation.⁹

And yet, the cumulative effect of the strategic and tactical program of the ANC and SACP, consummated in the post 1990 'transitional' period, has been to gradually demobilize the only 'constituency' capable of leading and carrying through such a pre-condition - that class of South Africa's workers and unemployed. The strategic primacy given to the achievement of 'national democracy' has allowed for a fundamental contradiction to permeate the South African liberation struggle; it is that the ANC and SACP's own base constituency would ultimately have to be fellow-travelers in the 'struggle' with a whole host of social forces whose fundamental interests are inimical to anything more than formal bourgeois political democracy.

From a peculiarly romanticized attachment to 'classic' guerrilla warfare, to a rhetorically heavy notion of insurrectionary 'people's power', to social and political

'contracts' with capital, the strategic thrust of the ANC and SACP's struggle for South African liberation has consistently underestimated and seriously undermined the potential and actual struggle of the 'people' themselves. More specifically, the political strategies of the liberation movement have lent themselves to a truncated recognition and incorporation of actual struggle on the ground.

What has made this cumulative strategy all the more removed from the possibilities of attaining a genuine 'transfer of power to the people' has been the false separation, both theoretically and practically, between political and social and economic change. Because of this, processes such as democratization have taken on a narrowly petite bourgeoisie nationalist, and predominantly political, meaning and context. Under such an approach there can be no real analytical or strategic distinction between national liberation struggles and socialist revolution. This perspective is thus left with no option but to see socio-economic change as secondary (i.e. it privileges the economic *status quo* - capitalism). These are some of the reasons why this study has argued the applicability of a Marxist theory of revolution/struggle, because it gives us the tools with which we can dissect form and content, means and end.

If not before in a less visible way, the 'political' perspective has certainly been dominant in South Africa since February 1990. From that time on, the ANC and SACP political leadership were faced with responding to new challenges, and their response emphatically tore the veil from the halcyon days of radical slogans about co-determinous revolutionary social and political transformation.

It is not surprising then, that many movement leaders and intellectuals presently claim that the political changes which were consummated by the April 1994 elections (even if

in the form of co-governance with the National Party), contain the 'seeds' for fundamental social and economic change.¹⁰ The Alliance-initiated Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP)¹¹ is pointed to as an example of present and ongoing policy formation that can deliver, at the very least, basic material goods to the people; it is always followed with the rejoinder that it must be 'people-driven'. And yet, if analyzed in the general context of the Alliance's strategic path (both past and present), it is not difficult to see that the potentialities of the RDP are inherently bounded by the very same logic and practice that infused previous struggle. A major contradiction of ANC and SACP politics has been the seeming unwillingness to recognize that revolutionary struggle cannot be advanced by attempting to reconcile the priorities of the 'people' with the competitive priorities of capital.¹²

The macro-nationalist approach to struggle that has characterized Alliance politics to the present has virtually institutionalized the above mentioned contradiction. What this has led to has been the subordination of class organization and politics. In turn, this has allowed the struggle for liberation to be infused by, and to accept, all those "antithetical forms of social unity under capitalism."¹³ In simple terms, the ANC and SACP have for far too long been trying to have their cake and eat it too. Under these circumstances, the mass struggles for revolutionary nationalist transformation are turned into little more than a 'struggle' for petite bourgeoisie reformism. As Lenin argued in response to the 'economists' of his day who wanted to divide political and economic struggles, the point of all revolutionary struggles was to integrate the two under working class leadership. Only then could there be hope of fundamental transformation in society.¹⁴

Laboring under a Weighted Dialecticism

Soon after signing the Declaration of Intent with President De Klerk at the beginning of 1993, Nelson Mandela wondered out loud:

Who would have thought that as a result of these discussions, the State of Emergency would be lifted, political prisoners released, exiles allowed to return, a climate of free political activity in the greater part of South Africa would prevail, and repressive legislation would either be amended or repealed... (providing) a basis for movement towards a united, non-racial, democratic, and non-sexist South Africa?¹⁵

While there was no one to immediately answer Mandela's implicitly leading query, it could well be imagined that the response from a majority of South Africans would have been to wonder what their struggles had been for if not about realizing these long-standing and most basic demands of the ANC.

Indeed, Mandela's 'thoughts' encapsulate one of the central contradictions inherent in the dialectic of struggle which this study has attempted to grasp: it is that the ANC and SACP have historically given excessive, and often misdirected, strategic weight to the objective conditions (balance of forces) under which they have pursued the (subjective) goals and aspirations of national liberation. One of the most important results of this has been a strategic approach to liberation that substantively underestimates and emasculates the potentialities of the activities of 'ordinary people' in whose name the struggle for national liberation is conducted. Marx's concept of the 'self-activity' of the oppressed classes on the other hand, allows us to identify 'ordinary people's' struggles as absolutely central to any substantive social transformation.

Through a critical historical analysis of the ANC and SACP's struggle for national liberation in South Africa, I have tried to show that the way in which this dialectic of

struggle has been played out has substantively undermined the realization of a genuine transformatory liberation. At the heart of this historic problematic in the South African context (and applicable to many other twentieth century liberation struggles) has been the failure to strategically prioritize the will and leading role of the base constituency within the liberation movement. The ANC and SACP (guided by their leading members) have been unwilling, both theoretically and practically, to trust the very 'people' they claim to represent; they have, in effect, been unable to trust real democracy.¹⁶

In South Africa there can be little argument that these 'people' are the workers and unemployed, both urban and rural (and predominantly black). And yet the cumulative history of ANC and SACP practice reveals a weighted strategic tendency to truncate the 'self-activity' and 'self-emancipation' of that base constituency. The dialectical relationship between the objective balance of forces in a given social milieu and the activity of those seeking to liberate themselves and fundamentally alter that balance is part of a historically fluid social process in which there are no absolutes nor impenetrable barriers. While the structural characteristics of apartheid capitalism have necessarily shaped the strategic approach of the ANC and SACP, the potentiality of transforming that structure rests squarely with the practical struggles of the 'ordinary mass'.

This study has applied a framework of analysis to the South African struggle for national liberation that views both structural conditions and the activities of those who are attempting to change those conditions as fluid expressions of the social reality of apartheid capitalism. In other words, a theoretical lens with which to dissect the dialectic of the ongoing South African revolution. By focusing on this dialectic, and not on any one referential factor, the study has been able to elucidate many of the

central elements that constitute a revolutionary theory; the state, the international environment, class struggle. Above all though, the study has shown that no one of these elements can stand alone as representative of the analytical and practical possibilities of revolution.

Specifically, this study has attempted to show the interrelatedness of these elements; thus, the character of, and struggle over the state can be analyzed in relation to the corresponding character of material struggles taking place between all class forces, both internally and internationally. However, the state (as partially constitutive of structure) is only one of the referential points in analyzing a fluid revolutionary situation; grassroots struggles (themselves emanating from a confluence of subjective and objective factors), form an equally important element of the dialectic of struggle. Likewise, the international environment is viewed as a fluid component (constraining and/or liberating), that effects, and in turn is effected by the actions and forms of the state and class struggle.

Through such an analytical lens this study avoids the trap into which other studies of revolution have fallen; i.e. attempting to isolate a singular referential point for analyzing and explaining revolutionary periods and revolutionary action. Whether it is a state-centric structuralist interpretation or one based on a 'pure' organizational-value competition, unilinear theories of revolution end up atomizing the complexities of revolution itself. These theories are thus wholly unable to fully analyze or appreciate the differential realities that are constitutive of ongoing struggle by 'ordinary' people.

What this study has tried to make clear is that the struggle for the liberation of South Africa, as practiced by the ANC and SACP, has failed to strategically locate itself within that 'ordinary mass' as a means to the desired end - national liberation for a full 'transfer of power to the

people'. Until such time the 'people' of South Africa will continue to struggle - *A Luta Continua!*

NOTES

¹Jeremy Cronin, "Sell-Out or the Culminating Moment? Trying to Make Sense of the Transition," Paper presented to the History Workshop Conference - University of the Witwatersrand, July, 1994, p.26.

²The 'far-right' in this case denoted the white right (although Inkata was also considered to pose a substantial threat). This 'far-right' consisted of an amazing range of groups claiming to represent, and willing to fight for, the Afrikaner ideal of a 'volk' (in reality meaning a fully autonomous and separate state or homeland for Afrikaners unwilling to accept any sort of black participation in state rule). These groups ranged from the 'respectable' Conservative Party, to the neo-nazi AWB, to small 'ultra-right' organizations like the World Apartheid Movement.

While this 'far-right' certainly possessed a disruptive capacity, particularly with regards to those members or sympathizers in the Army and Police, the combination of the internal and international conditions within which the transition found itself mitigated strongly against any capacity (or willingness) for serious derailing of the transition process.

³ANC, NEC Statement, January 1993 (Johannesburg: pamphlet).

⁴These would include (amongst others), the FLN of Algeria, the PAIGC of Guinea Bissau/Cape Verde, ZANU/ZAPU of Zimbabwe, the MPLA of Angola, and the FSLN of Nicaragua. As in the case of the ANC/SACP, there were no doubt, many within the movements that did not share this perspective - but here I am referring to the leadership.

⁵There was mention in the ANC's Strategic Perspectives Document of the need for a dialectical approach to 'struggle'. Under the sub-heading of "Phases of the Democratic Revolution" it stated:

Our strategic perspective should take into account that the democratic revolution - for the attainment of majority rule - will proceed in various phases. Our possibilities relevant to each phase should not be pursued in a manner that produces defeats later because of a failure to recognize the dialectical inter-connection between various phases.

Yet, the 'dialectical inter-connection' talked about was decidedly one-sided. The way in which the practical politics of the Alliance were

pursued served to seriously undermine the possibilities of victories that might have propelled the dialectic in a radically different direction.

⁶Letter to the editor, in *Mayibuye* (April, 1993).

⁷This took the form of tightly controlled marches and rallies in which the leadership continuously stressed the need for the 'people' to remain 'calm and disciplined', and to show 'maturity' in the face of the incessant violence of the police and army. It was as if the leadership were returning to the 1950's, demanding that movement supporters act as though the intervening 35 years were now a distant memory. This is not to say that there was no need for disciplined struggle, but that the way in which the Alliance leadership perceived and ultimately actualized such discipline turned the positive dialectic of revolutionary struggle on its head. Instead of seeing and believing in the possibilities of 'people's' struggle to undermine the power of both state and capital, the approach of the Alliance leadership substantively undermined the potentialities of the very struggle they claimed to be leading.

⁸See Slovo (1976), pp. 146-147. Slovo had put it this way:

Thus there is a distinction between the creation of the new state form and the building of a new socialist economic formation. The former is made possible by a revolutionary seizure of power; the latter, through the exercise of that political power by a class whose interests are unconditionally served by a socialist order (p.147).

⁹As cited in *Ibid.*, p.111.

¹⁰For examples see the last two issues (No.'s 95 and 96) of *Work in Progress* as well as Saul (1991). There have been numerous public statements made by Alliance leaders and intellectuals (many of whom are now in government) in the first three months of the new dispensation attacking those who argue that the ANC has no will or intention to carry forward radical social and economic change, as 'ultra-leftists'.

¹¹The RDP was initially a COSATU inspired program designed to wed a future ANC government to a more radical commitment to policies that would address the needs of workers and the unemployed. Since its first draft in late 1993, the RDP has become (several drafts later) an omnibus program to which all sectors of South African society seem to want to be contributing. Indeed, many of the most important issues addressed in the RDP such as housing have literally been hijacked by representatives of big capital. All those 'social forces' mentioned in the text recognize the benefits of being fellow-travelers in reconstructing and developing the 'new' South Africa. The obvious questions that arise are: what kind of reconstruction and development is taking place?; and who is actually benefiting from it?

¹²The same critique can be applied to many of the national liberation movements that have struggled over the last thirty years. See note No. 4 for examples.

¹³See Fine & Davis (1991), chp.11.

¹⁴See Lenin (1969), pp. 54-65. Also see Fine & Davis, pp.317-318. For an engaging analysis of Lenin's views on such questions see Marcel Liebman, *Leninism Under Lenin* (London: Merlin Press, 1985).

¹⁵"A Year of Decisive Progress," Interview with Nelson Mandela *Mayibuye* 4, No.1, 1993, p.9.

¹⁶The word 'democracy' has become such a commonplace term for anything short of fascism that it is important to delineate its meaning. 'Democracy' can mean very little if its definition and practice are limited to the parameters of what is practiced in the self-referential capitalist 'democracies'. By democracy, I understand a set of social relationships in which 'ordinary' people take control of their own lives. Placed within the context of institutionalized class power this must then imply the space for both individuals and oppressed classes to shape the 'democratic' content of society. There can surely be no pre-determined conceptualization or practice of 'democracy' given the present uneven capacities for exercising power under conditions where access to, and possession of capital is a means of political and economic class control.

For an in-depth treatment of the entire question of democracy and its meaning and social location with the South African context see Dale McKinley, "Class and Democracy in the Struggle for Socialism; A reply to the 'structural reformers' and the 'radical democrats'," *Links*, No.3 (October-December, 1994), pp.44-65.

APPENDIX A

The Freedom Charter

Adopted at the Congress of the People on June 26, 1955.

Preamble:

We, the people of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know:

- that South Africa belongs to all those who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of the people;
- that our people have been robbed of their birthright to land, liberty and peace by a form of government founded on injustice and inequality;
- that our country will never be prosperous and free until all our people live in brotherhood, enjoying equal rights and opportunities;
- that only a democratic state, based on the will of the people, can secure to all their birthright without distinction of colour, race, sex or belief;

And therefore, we, the people of South Africa, black and white together - equals, countrymen and brothers - adopt this Freedom Charter. And we pledge ourselves to strive together, sparing neither strength nor courage, until the democratic changes here set out have been won.

The people shall govern!

Every man and woman shall have the right to vote for and to stand as a candidate for all bodies which make laws.

All people shall be entitled to take part in the administration of the country.

The rights of the people shall be the same, regardless of race, colour or sex.

All bodies of minority rule, advisory boards, councils and authorities shall be replaced by democratic organs of self-government.

All national groups shall have equal rights!

There shall be equal status in the bodies of the state, in the courts and in the schools for all national groups and races.

All people shall have equal right to use their own languages, and to develop their own folk culture and customs.

All national groups shall be protected by law against insults to their race and national pride.

The preaching and practice of national, race or colour discrimination and contempt shall be a punishable crime.

All apartheid laws and practices shall be set aside.

The people shall share in the country's wealth!

The national wealth of our country, the heritage of all South Africans, shall be restored to the people.

The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole.

All other industry and trade shall be controlled to assist the well-being of the people.

All people shall have equal rights to trade where they choose, to manufacture and to enter all trades, crafts and professions.

The land shall be shared among those who work it!

Restrictions of land ownership on a racial basis shall be ended, and all the land be redivided amongst those who work it, to banish famine and land hunger.

The state shall help the peasants with implements, seed, tractors and dams to save the soil and assist the tillers.

Freedom of movement shall be guaranteed to all who work on the land.

People shall not be robbed of their cattle, and forced labour and farm prisons shall be abolished.

All shall be equal before the law!

No one shall be imprisoned, deported or restricted without a fair trial.

No one shall be condemned by the order of any government official.

The courts shall be representative of all the people.

Imprisonment shall be only for serious crimes against the people, and shall aim at re-education, not vengeance.

The police force and army shall be open to all on an equal basis and shall be the helpers and protectors of the people.

All laws which discriminate on grounds of race, colour or belief shall be repealed.

All shall enjoy equal human rights!

The law shall guarantee to all their right to speak, to organise, to meet together, to publish, to preach, to worship and to educate their children.

The privacy of the house from police raids shall be protected by law.

All shall be free to travel without restriction from countryside to town, from province to province, and from South Africa abroad.

Pass Laws, permits and all other laws restricting these freedoms shall be abolished.

There shall be work and security!

All who work shall be free to form trade unions, to elect their officers and to make wage agreements with their employers.

The state shall recognise the right and duty of all to work, and to draw full unemployment benefits.

Men and women of all races shall receive equal pay for equal work.

There shall be a forty-hour working week, a national minimum wage, paid annual leave, and sick leave for all workers, and maternity leave on full pay for all working mothers.

Miners, domestic workers, farm workers and civil servants shall have the same rights as all others who work.

Child labour, compound labour, the tot system and contract labour shall be abolished.

The doors of learning and of culture shall be opened!

The government shall discover, develop and encourage national talent for the enhancement of our cultural life.

All cultural treasures of mankind shall be opened to all, by free exchange of books, ideas, and contact with other lands.

The aim of education shall be to teach the youth to love their people and their culture, to honour human brotherhood, liberty and peace.

Education shall be free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children.

Higher education and technical education shall be opened to all by means of state allowances and scholarships awarded on the basis of merit.

Adult illiteracy shall be ended by a mass state education plan.

Teachers shall have all the rights of other citizens.

the colour bar in cultural life, in sport and in education shall be abolished.

There shall be houses, security and comfort!

All people shall have the right to live where they choose, to be decently housed, and to bring up their families in comfort and security.

Unused housing space shall be made available to the people. Rent and prices shall be lowered, food plentiful and no one shall go hungry.

A preventative health scheme shall be run by the state.

Free medical care and hospitalization shall be provided for all, with special care for mothers and young children.

Slums shall be demolished, and new suburbs built where all have transport, roads, lighting, playing fields, crèches and social centres.

The aged, the orphans, the disabled and the sick shall be cared for by the state.

Rest, leisure and recreation shall be the right of all.

Fenced locations and ghettos shall be abolished and laws which break up families shall be repealed.

There shall be peace and friendship!

South Africa shall be a fully independent state which respects the right and sovereignty of all nations. South Africa shall strive to maintain world peace and the settlement of all international disputes by negotiation, not war.

Peace and friendship among our people shall be secured by upholding the equal rights, opportunities and status of all.

The people of Basotholand, Bechuanaland, and Swaziland shall be free to decide for themselves their own future.

The rights of all the people of Africa to independence and self-government shall be recognised, and shall be the basis of close cooperation.

Let all who love their people and their country now say, as we say here: "These freedoms we will fight for, side by side, throughout our lives, until we have won our liberty."

APPENDIX B

Strategy and Tactics of the ANC (1970)

(Note: this is an excerpt from the ANC's program 'Forward to Freedom').

The struggle of the oppressed people of South Africa is taking place within an international context of transition to the Socialist System, of the breakdown of the colonial system as a result of national liberation and socialist revolutions, and the fight for social and economic progress by the people of the whole world.

We in South Africa are part of the zone in which national liberation is the chief content of the struggle. On our continent sweeping advances have been registered which have resulted in the emergence to independent statehood of forty one states. Thus the first formal step of independence has been won in Africa and this fact exercises a big influence on the developments in our country.

The countries of Africa have not as yet broken the chains of colonialism and racism which hold them in oppression. In Mozambique, Angola, South-West Africa, Zimbabwe and South Africa White racialist and fascist regimes maintain systems which go against the current trend of African revolution and world development. This has been made possible by the tremendous economic and military power at the disposal of these regimes built with the help of imperialism.

The main pillar of the unholy alliance of Portugal, Rhodesia and the South Africa is the Republic of South

Africa. The strategy and tactics of our revolution require for their formulation and understanding a full appreciation of the interlocking and interweaving of International, African and Southern African developments which play on our situation.

South Africa was conquered by force and is today ruled by force. At moments when White autocracy feels itself threatened, it does not hesitate to use the gun. When the gun is not in use, legal and administrative terror, fear, social and economic pressures, complacency and confusion generated by propaganda and 'education', are the devices brought into play in an attempt to harness the people's opposition. Behind these device hovers force. Whether in reserve or actual employment, force is ever present and this has been so since the White man came to Africa.

Unending Resistance to White Domination

From the time alien rule was imposed there has been - historically speaking - unbroken resistance to this domination. It has taken different forms at different times but it has never been abandoned. For the first 250 years there were regular armed clashes, battles and wars. The superior material forces of the enemy, the divided and often fragmented nature of the resistance, the unchallenged ascendancy of imperialism as a world system up to the beginning of the 20th century, the historically understandable absence of political cohesion and leadership in the people's camp; these and other factors combine to end the first phase of resistance against alien domination. But the protracted character of this resistance unequalled anywhere else in Africa is underlined by the fact that the armed subjugation of the indigenous people was only really accomplished by the beginning of this century. The defeat of the Bambata Rebellion in 1906 marked the end of this first phase and set the stage for the handing over of the administration of the country to local whites in 1910. The

50 years which followed was not a period of resignation or of acceptance. It was a period of redevelopment and regrouping under new conditions; a period in which newly created political formations of the people continued to struggle with the enemy and grew into maturity; a period in which, above all, national consciousness began to assert itself against tribal sectionalism. This period witnessed the emergence and development of the primary organisation of the liberation movement - The African National Congress. It also saw the evolvment of national organisations reflecting the aspirations of other oppressed non-White groups - the Coloureds and the Indians - and the creation of economic and political organisations - the South African Communist Party and trade unions - which reflected the special aims and aspirations of the newly developed and doubly exploited working class. This was a period of organisational growth. It was punctuated by struggles involving techniques ranging from orthodox mass campaigning to general strikes, to mass acts of defiance. It culminated in the decision taken in 1961 to prepare for armed confrontation. December 1961 saw the opening stages of this campaign in the simultaneous acts of sabotage which occurred in most of the main urban centres on the 16th.

The Move to Armed Struggle

Why was the decision for armed struggle taken in 1961? Why not 1951 or 1941 or 1931? Is it that the character of the state had so altered fundamentally that only in 1961 did armed struggle become the only alternative? Not at all. There has never been a moment in the history of South Africa since 1952 in which the White ruling class would have given privileges without a physical battle. Why then did organisations like the African National Congress not call for armed struggle? Was it perhaps that they were not really revolutionary or that it was only in the early '60's that they began to appreciate the correct strategy? Is there perhaps substance to the accusations by some of our

detractors that until the early sixties our liberation movement was lacking in military fervour and the desire for radical change? In other words was its policy not a revolutionary one? What is our measuring rod for revolutionary policy? A look at this concept will help towards a more profound understanding not only of the past but of the future. It is therefore not out of place to devote a word to it.

In essence a revolutionary policy is one which holds out the quickest and most fundamental transformation and transfer of power from one class to another. In real life such radical changes are brought about not by imaginary forces but by those whose outlook and readiness to act is very much influenced by historically determined factors.

To ignore the real situation and to play about with imaginary forces, concepts and ideals is to invite failure. The art of revolutionary leadership consists in providing leadership to the masses and not just to its most advanced elements; it consists of setting a pace which accords with objective conditions and the real possibilities at hand. The revolutionary-sounding phrase does not always reflect revolutionary policy, and revolutionary-sounding policy is not always the spring-board for revolutionary advance. Indeed, what appears to be 'militant' and 'revolutionary' can often be counter-revolutionary. It is surely a question of whether, in the given concrete situation, the course or policy advocated will aid or impede the prospects of the conquest of power. In this - the only test, the advocacy of armed struggle can, in some situations, be as counter-revolutionary as the advocacy of its opposite in other situations. Untimely, ill planned or premature manifestations of violence impede and do not advance the prospects for revolutionary change and are clearly counter-revolutionary. It is obvious therefore that policy and organisational structures must grow out of the real situation if they are not to become meaningless clichés...

Our Approach to Revolutionary Armed Struggle

In a way, the decision taken in 1961 was, historically speaking, in the tradition of the earlier armed resistance to the entrenchment of the foreigner. But it is now occurring in a new situation. Not only had this situation to be understood but the art and science - both political and military - of armed liberation struggles in the modern epoch had to be grasped and applied. The head-on mobile warfare of the traditional African armies of the past could not meet the challenge. The riot, the street fight, the outburst of unorganised violence, individual terrorism; these were symptoms of the militant spirit but not pointers to revolutionary technique. The winning of our freedom by armed struggle - the only method left open to us - demands more than passion. It demands an understanding of revolutionary theory and techniques in the actual conditions facing us. It demands a sober assessment of the obstacles in our way and an appreciation that such a struggle is bitter and protracted. It demands, too, the dominance in our thinking of achievement over drama. We believe our movement acted in accordance with these guidelines when it embarked upon the detailed preparation for the launching of the guerrilla struggle. We understood that the main physical environment of such a struggle in the initial period is outside the enemy strongholds in the cities, in the vast stretches of our countryside. The opening steps in 1961 - organised sabotage mainly in the urban areas - served a special purpose and was never advanced as a technique which would, on its own, either lead to the destruction of the state or even do it great material damage (although guerrilla activity in the urban areas of a special type is always important as an auxiliary). At the same time there was a threefold need to be met in order to lay the foundations for more developed and meaningful armed activity of the guerrilla type.

The first was the need to create a military apparatus and, more particularly to recruit large numbers of professional cadres who were to be trained and who would form the core of future guerrilla bands.

The second was the need to demonstrate effectively to all that we were making a sharp and open break with the processes of the previous period which had correctly given emphasis to militant struggle short of armed confrontation.

The third was the need to present an effective method for the overthrow of White supremacy through planned rather than spontaneous activity. The sabotage campaign was an earnest indication of our seriousness in the pursuit of this new strategy. All three needs were served by this convincing evidence that our liberation movement had correctly adjusted itself to the new situation and was creating an apparatus actually capable of clandestinely hitting the enemy and making preparation for a more advanced phase. The situation was such that without activity of this nature our whole political leadership may have been at stake both inside and outside the country and the steps which were simultaneously taken for the recruitment and preparation of military cadres would have met with less response.

The Relationship between the Political and Military

When we talk of revolutionary armed struggle, we are talking of political struggle by means which include the use of military force even though once force as a tactic is introduced it has the most far-reaching consequences on every aspect of our activities. It is important to emphasise this because our movement must reject all manifestations of militarism which separates armed people's struggle from its political context.

Reference has already been made to the danger of the thesis which regards the creation of military areas as the generator of mass resistance. But even more is involved in this concept. One of the vital problems connected with this

bears on the important question of the relationship between the political and military. From the very beginning our Movement has brooked no ambiguity concerning this. The primacy of the political leadership is unchallenged and supreme and all revolutionary formations and levels (whether armed or not) are subordinate to this leadership. To say this is not just to invoke tradition. This approach is rooted in the very nature of this type of revolutionary struggle and is borne out by the experience of the overwhelming majority of revolutionary movements which have engaged in such struggles. Except in very rare instances, the people's armed challenge against a foe with formidable material strength does not achieve dramatic and swift success. The path is filled with obstacles and we harbour no illusions on this score in the case of South Africa. In the long run it can only succeed if it attracts the active support of the mass of the people. Without this lifeblood it is doomed. Even in our country with the historical background and traditions of armed resistance still, within the memory of many people and the special developments of the immediate past, the involvement of the masses is unlikely to be the result of a sudden natural and automatic consequence of military clashes. It has to won in all-round political mobilisation which must accompany the military activities. This included educational and agitational work throughout the country to cope with the sophisticated torrent of misleading propaganda and 'information' of the enemy which will become more intense as the struggle sharpens. When armed clashes begin they seldom involve more than a comparative handful of combatants whose very conditions of fighting-existence make them incapable of exercising the functions of all-round political leadership. The masses of the peasants, workers and youth, beleaguered for a long time by the enemy's military occupation, have to be activated in a multitude of ways not only to ensure a growing stream of recruits for the fighting units but to

harass the enemy politically so that his forces are dispersed and therefore weakened. This calls for the exercise of all-round political leadership.

All-Round Political Leadership

Guerrilla warfare, the special, and in our case the only form in which the armed liberation struggle can be launched, is neither static nor does it take place in a vacuum. The tempo, the overall strategy to be employed, the opening of new fronts, the progression from lower to higher forms and thence to mobile warfare; these and other vital questions cannot be solved by the military leadership alone, they require overall political judgments intricately involved with the people both inside and outside the actual areas of armed combat. If more awareness of oppression combined with heroic examples by armed bands were enough, the struggle would indeed be simple. There would be no collaborators and it would be hard to find neutrals. But to believe this is to believe that the course of the struggle is determined solely by what we do in the fighting units and further involves the fallacious assumption that the masses are rock-like and incorruptible. The enemy is as aware as we are that the side that wins the allegiance of the people, wins the struggle. It is naive to believe that oppressed and beleaguered people cannot temporarily, even in large numbers, be won over by fear, terror, lies, indoctrination and provocation to treat liberators as enemies. In fact history proves that without the most intensive all-round political activity this is the more likely result. It is therefore all the more vital that the revolutionary leadership is nationwide and has its roots both inside and outside the actual areas of combat. Above all, when victory comes, it must not be a hollow one. To ensure this we must also ensure that what is brought to power is not the army but the masses as a whole at the head of which stands its organised political leadership. This is the perspective which is rooted at all levels of our

liberation movements whether within or outside the army. Our confidence in final victory rests not on the wish or the dream but on our understanding of our own conditions and the historical processes. This understanding must be deepened and must be spread to every level of our Movement. We must have a clear grasp not only of ourselves and of our own forces but also of the enemy - of his power and vulnerability. Guerrilla struggle is certainly no exception to the rule that depth of understanding, and knowledge of realities, both favourable and unfavourable, make for more lasting commitment and more illuminating leadership. How then do we view the enemy that we face- his strength and weaknesses? What sort of structure do we face and how dogged will the enemy resistance be?

The Enemy - His Strength and Weakness

On the face of it the enemy is in stable command of a rich and varied economy which, even at this age when it is not required to extend itself, can afford an enormous military budget. He has a relatively well-trained and efficient army and police force. He can draw on fairly large manpower resources. In addition the major imperialist powers such as Britain, W. Germany, France, the United States and Japan who have an enormous stake in the economy of our country constitute a formidable support for the Apartheid regime. Already now before the crisis deepens the imperialist partners of South Africa have done much to develop the economy and the armament programme of South Africa. In a situation of crisis they may pass over from active support to active intervention to save the racist regime.

If there is one lesson that the history of guerrilla struggle has taught it is that the material strength and resources of the enemy is by no means a decisive factor. Guerrilla warfare almost by definition presents a situation in which there is a vast imbalance of material and military resources between the opposing sides. It is designed to cope

with the situation in which the enemy is infinitely superior in relation to every conventional factor of warfare. It is *par excellence* the weapon of the materially weak against the materially strong. Given its popular character and a population which increasingly sides with and shields the guerrilla whilst at the same time opposing and exposing the enemy, the survival and growth of a people's army is assured by the skillful exercise of tactics. Surprise, mobility and tactical retreat should make it difficult for the enemy to bring into play its superior fire-power in any decisive battles. No individual battle is fought in circumstances favourable to the enemy. Superior forces can thus be harassed, weakened and, in the end, destroyed. The absence of an orthodox front, of fighting lines; the need of the enemy to attenuate his resources and lines of communication over vast areas; the need to protect the widely scattered installations on which this economy is dependent; these are among the factors which serve in the long run to compensate in favour of the guerrilla for the disparity in the starting strength of the adversaries. The words 'in the long run' must be stressed because it would be idle to dispute the considerable military advantages to the enemy of his high level industrialisation, his ready-to-hand reserves of white manpower and his excellent roads, railways and air transport which facilitate swift maneuvers and speedy concentration of personnel. But we must not overlook the fact that over a period of time many of these unfavourable factors will begin to operate in favour of the liberation forces:

1. The ready-to-hand resources including food production depend overwhelmingly on non-White labour which, with the growing intensity of the struggle, will not remain docile and co-operative.
2. The White manpower resources may seem adequate initially but must become dangerously stretched as

guerrilla warfare develops. Already extremely short of skilled labour - the monopoly of the Whites - the mobilisation of a large force for a protracted struggle will place a further burden of the working of the economy.

3. In contrast to many other major guerrilla struggles, the enemy's economic and manpower resources are all situated within the theatre of war and there is no secure external pool (other than direct intervention by a foreign state) safe from sabotage, mass action and guerrilla action on which the enemy can draw.
4. The very sophistication of the economy with its well developed system of communications makes it a much more vulnerable target. In an undeveloped country the interruption of supplies to any given region may be no more than a local setback.

In a highly sensitive modern structure of the South African type, the successful harassment of transport to any major industrial complex inevitably inflicts immense damage to the economy as a whole and to the morale of the enemy.

One of the more popular misconceptions concerning guerrilla warfare is that a physical environment which conforms to a special pattern is indispensable - thick jungle, inaccessible mountain areas, swamps, a friendly border and so on. The availability of this sort of terrain is, of course, of tremendous advantage to the guerrillas especially in the early non-operational phase training and other preparatory steps are undertaken and non-external bases are available for this purpose. When operations commence, the guerrilla cannot survive, let alone flourish, unless he moves to areas where people live and work and where the enemy can be engaged in combat. If he is fortunate enough to have behind him a friendly border or areas of difficult access which can provide temporary refuge it is,

of course, advantageous. But guerrilla warfare can be, and has been, waged in every conceivable type of terrain, in deserts, swamps, in farm fields, in built-up areas, in plains, in the bush and in countries without friendly borders or islands surrounded by the sea. This whole question is one of adjusting survival tactics to the sort of terrain in which operations have to be carried out.

In any case, in the vast expanse that is South Africa, a people's force will find a multitude of variations in topography, deserts, mountains, forests, veld and swamps. There might not appear to be a single impregnable mountain or impenetrable jungle but the country abounds in terrain which in general is certainly no less favourable for guerrilla operations than some of the terrain in which other guerrilla movements operated successfully. Also the issue must be looked at in the context of the guerrillas, who are armed and operate in the terrain. The combination makes an area impregnable for the guerrilla. South Africa's tremendous size will make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the White regime to keep the whole of it under armed surveillance in strength and in depth. Hence, an early development of a relatively safe (though shifting) rear is not beyond the realm of practicality...

The African Masses - the Main Force for Liberation

So much for the enemy. What of the liberation forces? Here too we are called upon to examine the most fundamental features of our situation which serve to mould our revolutionary strategy and tactics. The main content of the present stage of the South African revolution is the national liberation of the largest and most oppressed group - the African people. This strategic aim must govern every aspect of the conduct of our struggle whether it be the formulation of policy or the creation of structures. Amongst other things, it demands in the first place the maximum mobilisation of the African people as a dispossessed and

racially oppressed nation. This is the mainspring and it must not be weakened. It involves a stimulation and a deepening of national confidence, national pride and national assertiveness. Properly channeled and properly led, these qualities do not stand in conflict with the principles of internationalism. Indeed, they become the basis for more lasting and more meaningful co-operation; a co-operation which is self-imposed, equal and one which is neither based on dependence nor gives the appearance of being so.

The national character of the struggle must therefore dominate our approach. But it is a national struggle which is taking place in a different era and in a different context from those which characterised the early struggles against colonialism. It is happening in a new kind of world - a world which is no longer monopolised by the imperialist world system; a world in which the existence of the powerful socialist system and a significant sector of newly liberated areas has altered the balance of forces; a world in which the horizons liberated from foreign oppression extend beyond mere formal political control and encompass the element which makes such control meaningful - economic emancipation. It is also happening in a new kind of South Africa in which there is a large and well-developed working class whose class consciousness and in which the independent expressions of the working people - their political organs and trade unions - are very much part of the liberation front. Thus, our nationalism must not be confused with chauvinism or narrow nationalism of a previous epoch. It must not be confused with the classical drive by an elitist group among the oppressed people to gain ascendancy so that they can replace the oppressor in the exploitation of the mass.

But none of this detracts from the basically national context of our liberation drive. In the last resort it is only the success of the national democratic revolution which - by destroying the existing social and economic relationships - will bring with it a correction of the

historical injustices perpetuated against the indigenous majority and thus lay the basis for a new - and deeper internationalist - approach. Until then, the national sense of grievance is the most potent revolutionary force which must be harnessed. To blunt it in the interests of abstract concepts of internationalism is, in the long run, doing neither a service to the revolution nor to internationalism (original emphasis).

Our Fighting Alliance

Whatever instruments are created to give expression to the unity of the liberation drive, they must accommodate two fundamental propositions:

Firstly, they must not be ambiguous on the question of the primary role of the most oppressed African mass and,

Secondly, those belonging to the other oppressed groups and those few White revolutionaries who show themselves ready to make common cause with our aspirations, must be fully integrated on the basis on individual equality.

Approached in the right spirit these two propositions do not stand in conflict but reinforce one another. Equality of participation in our national front does not mean a mechanical parity between the various national groups. Not only would this in practice amount to inequality (again at the expense of the majority), but it would lend flavour to the slander which our enemies are ever ready to spread of a multiracial alliance dominated by minority groups. This has never been so and will never be so. But the sluggish way in which the movement inside the country responded to the new situation after 1960 in which co-operation between some organisations which were legal (e.g. SAIC, CPO, COD) and those that were illegal (e.g. ANC) sometimes led to the superficial impression that the legal organisations - because they could speak and operate more publicly and thus more noticeably - may have had more than their deserved place in the leadership of the Alliance.

Therefore, not only the substance but the form of our structural creations must, in a way in which the people can see, give expression to the main emphasis of the present stage of our struggle. This approach is not a pandering to chauvinism, to racialism or other such backward attitudes. We are revolutionaries not narrow nationalists. Committed revolutionaries are our brothers to whatever group they belong. There can be no second class participants in our Movement. It is for the enemy we reserve our assertiveness and our justified sense of grievance.

The important task of mobilising and gaining the support of other oppressed non-White groups has already been referred to. Like every other oppressed group (including the Africans) we must not naively assume that mere awareness of oppression will, by itself, push the Indian and Coloured people in the direction of opposing the enemy and aligning themselves with the liberation movement. The potential is, of course there, because in a very real sense the future of the Indian and Coloured people and their liberation as oppressed groups is intimately bound up with the liberation of the Africans. But active support and participation has to be fought for and won. Otherwise the enemy will succeed in its never-ending attempt to create a gap between these groups and the Africans and even recruit substantial numbers of them to actively collaborate with it. The bottom of the barrel will be scraped in the attempt to create confusion about the objectives of the liberation movement. More particularly, the enemy will feed on the insecurity and dependency which is often part of the thinking of minority oppressed groups. They will try to raise a doubt in their minds about whether there is a place for them in a future liberated South Africa. They have already spread the slander that at best for the Coloureds and Indians White domination will be replaced by Black domination.

It is therefore all the more important, consistent with our first principle, that the Coloured and Indian people

should see themselves as an integral part of the liberation movement and not as mere auxiliaries.

The Working Class

Is there a special role for the working class in our national struggle? We have already referred to the special character of the South African social and economic structure. In our country - more than in any other part of the oppressed world - it is inconceivable for liberation to have meaning without a return of the wealth of the land to the people as a whole. It is therefore a fundamental feature of our strategy that victory must embrace more than formal political democracy. To allow the existing economic forces to retain their interests intact is to feed the root of racial supremacy and does not represent even the shadow of liberation.

Our drive towards national emancipation is therefore in a very real way bound up with economic emancipation. We have suffered more than just national humiliation. Our people are deprived of their due in the country's wealth; their skills have been suppressed and poverty and starvation has been their life experience. The correction of these centuries-old economic injustices lies at the very core of our national aspirations. We do not underestimate the complexities which will face a people's government during the transformation period nor the enormity of the problems of meeting economic needs of the mass of the oppressed people. But one thing is certain - in our land this cannot be effectively tackled unless the basic wealth and the basic resources are at the disposal of the people as a whole and are not manipulated by sections or individuals be they White or Black.

This perspective of a speedy progression from formal liberation to genuine and lasting emancipation is made more real by the existence in our country of a large and growing working class whose class consciousness complements national consciousness. Its political organisations - and the trade

unions have played a fundamental role in shaping and advancing our revolutionary cause. It is historically understandable that the doubly-oppressed and doubly-exploited working class constitutes a distinct and reinforcing layer of our liberation and Socialism and do not stand in conflict with the national interest. Its militancy and political consciousness as a revolutionary class will play no small part in our victory and in the construction of a real people's South Africa.

Beyond our borders in Zimbabwe, Angola, Mozambique, Namibia are our brothers and sisters who similarly are engaged in a fierce struggle against colonialist and racist regimes. We fight an Unholy Alliance of Portugal, Rhodesia and South Africa with the latter as the main economic and military support. The historic ZAPU/ANC Alliance is a unique form of co-operation between two liberation movements which unites the huge potential of the oppressed people in both South Africa and Zimbabwe. The extension of co-operation and co-ordination of all the people of Southern Africa as led by FRELIMO, ZAPU, SWAPO, MPLA, and the ANC is a vital part of our strategy.

What then is the broad purpose of our military struggle? Simply put, in the first phase, it is the complete political and economic emancipation of all our people and the constitution of a society which accords with the basic provisions of our programme - the Freedom Charter. This, together with our general understanding of our revolutionary theory, provides us with the strategic framework for the concrete elaboration and implementation of policy in a continuously changing situation. It must be combined with a more intensive programme of research, examination and analysis of the conditions of the different strata of our people (in particular those on the land), their local grievances, hopes and aspirations, so that the flow from theory to application - when the situation makes application possible - will be unhampered.

APPENDIX C

Constitutional Guidelines For a Democratic South Africa
(1988)

The Freedom Charter, adopted in 1955 by the Congress of the People at Kliptown near Johannesburg, was the first systematic statement in the history of our country of the political and constitutional vision of a free, democratic and non-racial South Africa.

The Freedom Charter today remains unique as the only South African document of its kind that adheres firmly to democratic principles as accepted throughout the world. Among South Africans it has become by far the most widely accepted programme for a post-apartheid country. The stage is now approaching where the Freedom Charter must be converted from a vision for the future into a constitutional reality.

We in the African National Congress submit to the people of South Africa, and to all those throughout the world who wish to see an end to apartheid, our basic guidelines for the foundations of government in a post-apartheid South Africa. Extensive and democratic debate on these guidelines will mobilise the wide at sections of the population to achieve agreement on how to put an end to the tyranny and oppression under which our people live, thus enabling them to lead normal and decent lives as free citizens in a free country.

The immediate aim is to create a just and democratic society that will sweep away the centuries-old legacy of colonial conquest and white domination, and abolish all laws

imposing racial oppression and discrimination. The removal of discriminatory laws and the eradication of all vestiges of the illegitimate regime are, however, not enough: the structures and the institutions of apartheid must be dismantled and be replaced by democratic ones. Steps must be taken to ensure that apartheid ideas and practices are not permitted to appear in old forms or new.

In addition, the effects of centuries of racial domination and inequality must be overcome by constitutional provisions for corrective action which guarantees a rapid and irreversible redistribution of wealth and opening up of facilities to all. The Constitution must also be such as to promote the habits of non-racial and non-sexist thinking, the practice of anti-racist behaviour and the acquisition of genuinely-shared patriotic consciousness.

The Constitution must give firm protection to the fundamental human rights of all citizens. There shall be equal rights for all individuals, irrespective of race, colour, sex or creed. In addition, it requires the entrenching of equal cultural, linguistic and religious rights for all.

Under the conditions of contemporary South Africa 87% of land and 95% of the instruments of production of the country are in the hands of the ruling class, which is solely drawn from the white community. It follows, therefore, that constitutional protection for group rights would perpetuate the status quo and would mean that the mass of the people would continue to be constitutionally trapped in poverty and remain outsiders in the land of their birth.

Finally, success of the constitution will be, to a large extent, determined by the degree to which it promotes conditions for the active involvement of all sectors of the population at all levels in government and in the economic and cultural life. Bearing these fundamental objectives in mind, we declare that the elimination of apartheid and the

creation of a truly just and democratic South Africa requires a constitution based on the following principles:

The State

- a. South Africa shall be an independent, unitary, democratic and non-racial state.
- b. Sovereignty shall belong to a people as a whole and shall be exercised through one central legislature, executive, judiciary and administration. Provision shall be made for the delegation of the powers of the central authority to subordinate administrative units for the purposes of more efficient administration and democratic participation.
- c. The institution of hereditary rulers and chiefs shall be transformed to serve the interests of the people as a whole, democratic in structure and functioning, and dedicated to defending the principles of the constitution.
- d. All organs of government, including justice, security and armed forces, shall be representative of the people as a whole, democratic in their structure and functioning, and dedicated to defending the principles of the constitution.

Franchise

- e. In the exercise of their sovereignty, the people shall have the right to vote under a system of universal suffrage based on the principle of one person/one vote.
- f. Every voter shall have the right to stand for election and be elected to all legislative bodies.

National Identity

- g. It shall be policy to promote the growth of a single national identity and loyalty binding on all South Africans. At the same time, the state shall recognise the linguistic and cultural diversity of the people and provide facilities for free linguistic and cultural development.

Bill of Rights and Affirmative Action

- h. The constitution shall include a Bill of Rights based on the Freedom Charter. Such a Bill of Rights shall guarantee the fundamental human rights of all citizens, irrespective of race, colour, sex or creed, and shall provide appropriate mechanisms for their protection and enforcement.
- I. The state and all social institutions shall be under a constitutional duty to eradicate racial discrimination in all its forms.
- j. The state and all social institutions shall be under a constitutional duty to eradicate, speedily, the economic and social inequalities produced by racial discrimination.
- k. The advocacy or practice of racism, fascism, Nazism or the incitement of ethnic or regional exclusiveness shall be outlawed.
- l. Subject to clauses (i) and (k) above, the democratic state shall guarantee the basic rights and freedoms, such as freedom of association, thought, worship and the press. Furthermore, the state shall have the duty to protect the right to work and guarantee the right to education and social security.

- m. All parties which conform the provision of (i) and (k) above shall have the right to exist and to take part in the political life of the country.

Economy

- n. The state shall ensure that the entire economy serves the interest and well-being of the entire population.
- o. The state shall have the right to determine the general context in which economic life takes place and define the limit to the rights and obligations attaching to the ownership and use of productive capacity.
- p. The private sector of the economy shall be obliged to cooperate with the state in realising the objectives of the Freedom Charter in promoting social well-being.
- q. The economy shall be a mixed one, with a public sector, a private sector, a co-operative sector and a small-scale family sector.
- r. Co-operative forms of economic enterprise, village industries and small scale family activities shall be supported by the state.
- s. The state shall promote the acquisition of management, technical and scientific skills among all sections of the population, especially the blacks.
- t. Property for personal use and consumption shall be constitutionally protected.

Land

- u. The state shall devise and implement a land reform programme that will include and address the following issues: Abolition on all restrictions of ownership and use of land; Implementation of land reform in conformity with the principle of affirmative action, taking into account the status of victims of forced removals.

Workers

- v. A Charter protecting workers' trade union rights, especially the right to strike and collective bargaining, shall be incorporated into the constitution.

Women

- w. Women shall have equal rights in all spheres of public and private life and the state shall take affirmative action to eliminate inequalities and discrimination between the sexes.

The Family

- x. The family, parenthood and children's rights shall be protected.

International

- y. South Africa shall be a non-aligned state committed to the principles of the Charter of the OAU and the Charter of the UN and to the achievement of national liberation, liberation, world peace and disarmament.

APPENDIX D

Harare Declaration (1989)

Note: Declaration of the OAU Ad-hoc Committee on Southern Africa on the Question of South Africa

I. Preamble

1. The people of Africa, singly, collectively and acting through the OAU, are engaged in serious efforts to establish peace throughout the continent by ending all conflicts through negotiations based on the principle of justice and peace for all.
2. We reaffirm our conviction, which history confirms, that where colonial, racial and apartheid domination exists, there can neither be peace nor justice.
3. Accordingly, we reiterate that while the apartheid system in South Africa persists, the people's of our continent as a whole cannot achieve the fundamental objectives of justice, human dignity and peace which are both crucial in themselves and fundamental to the stability and development of Africa.
4. With regard to the region of Southern Africa, the entire continent is vitally interested that the processes, in which it is involved, leading to the complete and genuine independence of Namibia, as well as peace in Angola and Mozambique, should succeed in the shortest possible time. Equally,

Africa is deeply concerned that the destabilisation by South Africa of all countries of the region, whether through direct aggression, sponsorship of surrogates, economic subversion and other means, should end immediately.

5. We recognise the reality that permanent peace and stability in Southern Africa can only be achieved when the system of apartheid in South Africa has been liquidated and South Africa transformed into a united, democratic and non-racial country. We therefore reiterate that all the necessary measures should be adopted now, to bring a speedy end to the apartheid system, in the interest of all the people of Southern Africa, our continent and the world at large.
6. We believe that, as a result of the liberation struggle and international pressure against apartheid, as well as global efforts to liquidate regional conflicts, possibilities exist for further movement towards the resolution of the problems facing the people of South Africa. For these possibilities to lead to fundamental change in South Africa, the Pretoria regime must abandon its abhorrent concepts and practices of racial domination and its record of failure to honour agreements, all of which have resulted in the loss of so many lives and the destruction of much property in the countries of Southern Africa.
7. We reaffirm our recognition of the rights of all peoples, including those of South Africa, to determine their own destiny, and to work out for themselves the institutions and the system of government under which they will, by general consent, live and work together to build a

harmonious society. The Organisation of African Unity remains committed to do everything possible and necessary, to assist the people of South Africa, in such ways as the representatives of the oppressed may determine, to achieve this objective. We are certain that, arising from this duty to help end the criminal apartheid system, the rest of the world community is ready to extend similar assistance to the people of South Africa.

8. We make these commitments because we believe that all people are equal and have equal rights to human dignity and respect, regardless of colour, race, sex or creed. We believe that all man and women have the right and duty to participate in their own government, as equal members of society. No individual or group of individuals has any rights to govern others without their consent. The apartheid system violates all these fundamental and universal principles. Correctly characterised as a crime against humanity, it is responsible for the deaths of countless numbers of people in South Africa, resulting in untold loss of life, destruction of property and massive displacement of innocent men, women and children. This scourge and affront to humanity must be fought and eradicated in its totality.
9. We have therefore supported and continue to support all those in South Africa who pursue this noble objective through political, armed and other forms of struggle. We believe this to be our duty, carried out in the interest of all humanity.
10. While extending this support to those who struggle for a non-racial and democratic society in South Africa, a point on which no compromise is possible,

we have repeatedly expressed our preference for a solution arrived at by peaceful means. We know that the majority of the people of South Africa and their liberation movement, who have been compelled to take up arms, have also upheld this position for many decades and continue to do so.

11. The positions contained in this Declaration are consistent with and are a continuation of those elaborated in the Lusaka Manifesto, two decades ago. They take into account the changes that have taken place in South Africa since that Manifesto was adopted by the OAU and the rest of the international community. They constitute a new challenge to the Pretoria regime to join in the noble effort to end the apartheid system, an objective to which the OAU has been committed from its birth.
12. Consequently, we shall continue to do everything in our power to help intensify the liberation struggle and international pressure against the system of apartheid until this system is ended and South Africa is transformed into united democratic and non-racial country, with justice and security for all its citizens.
13. In keeping with this solemn resolve, and responding to the wishes of the representatives of the majority of the people of South Africa, we publicly pledge ourselves to the positions contained here under. We are convinced that their implementation will lead to the speedy end of the apartheid system and therefore the opening of a new dawn of peace for all the people's of Africa, in which racism, colonial domination and white minority rule on our continent would be abolished for ever.

II. Statement of Principles

14. We believe that a conjuncture of circumstances exists, which, if there is a demonstrable readiness on the part of the Pretoria regime to engage in negotiations genuinely and seriously, could create the possibility to end apartheid through negotiations. Such an eventuality would be an expression of the long-standing preference of the people of South Africa to arrive at a political settlement.
15. We would therefore encourage the people of South Africa, as part of their overall struggle, to get together to negotiate and end to the apartheid system and agree on all the measures that are necessary to transform their country into a non-racial democracy. We support the position held by the majority of the people of South Africa that these objectives and not the amendment or reform of the apartheid system, should be the aims of the negotiations.
16. We are at one with them that the outcome of such a process should be a new constitutional order based on the following principles, among others:
 - 16.1 South Africa shall become a united, democratic and non-racial state.
 - 16.2 All its people shall enjoy common and equal citizenship and national identity, regardless of race, colour, sex or creed.
 - 16.3 All its people shall have the right to participate in the government and administration of the country on the basis of a universal suffrage,

exercised through one person one vote, under a common voters roll.

16.4 All people have the right to form and join any political party of their choice, provided that this is not in the furtherance of racism.

16.5 All shall enjoy universally recognised human rights, freedoms and civil liberties, protected under an entrenched Bill of Rights.

16.6 South Africa shall have a new legal system which shall guarantee equality of all before the law.

16.7 South Africa shall have an independent and non-racial judiciary.

16.8 There shall be created an economic order which shall promote and advance the well-being of all South Africans.

16.9 A democratic South Africa shall respect the rights and sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries and pursue a policy of peace, friendship and mutually beneficial co-operation with all peoples.

17. We believe that the agreement on the principles shall continue the foundation for an internationally acceptable solution which shall enable South Africa to take its rightful place as an equal partner among the African and world community of nations.

III. Climate for Negotiations

18. Together with the rest of the world, we believe that it is essential, before any negotiations take place, that the necessary climate for negotiations be created. The apartheid regime has the urgent responsibility to respond positively to this universally acclaimed demand and thus create this climate.
19. Accordingly, the present regime, should, at the very least:
 - 19.1 Release all political prisoners and detainees unconditionally and refrain from imposing any restrictions on them.
 - 19.2 Lift all bans and restrictions on all proscribed and restricted organisations and people.
 - 19.3 Remove all troops from the townships.
 - 19.4 End the state of emergency and repeal all legislation, such as, the Internal Security Act, designed to circumscribe political activity.
 - 19.5 Cease all political executions.
20. These measures are necessary to produce the conditions in which free discussion can take place - an essential condition to ensure that the people themselves participate in the process of remaking their country. The measures listed above should therefore precede negotiations.

IV. Guidelines to the Process of Negotiation

21. We support the view of the South African liberation movement that upon the creation of this climate, the

process of negotiations should commence along the following lines:

21.1 Discussions should take place between the liberation movement and the South African regime to achieve the suspension of hostilities on both sides by agreeing to a mutually binding ceasefire.

21.2 Negotiations should then proceed to establish the basis for the adoption of a new Constitution by agreeing on among, others, the Principles enunciated above.

21.3 Having agreed on these Principles, the parties should then negotiate the necessary mechanism for drawing up the new Constitution.

21.4 The parties shall define and agree on the role to be played by the international community in ensuring a successful transition to a democratic order.

21.5 The parties shall agree on the formation of an interim government to supervise the process of the drawing up and adoption of a new constitution; govern and administer the country, as well as effect the transition to a democratic order including the holding of the elections.

21.6 After the adoption of the new Constitution, all armed hostilities will be deemed to have been formally terminated.

21.7 For its part, the international community would lift the sanctions that have been imposed against apartheid South Africa.

22. The new South Africa shall qualify for the membership of the Organisation of African Unity.

V. Programme of Action

23. In pursuance of the objectives stated in this document, the Organisation of African Unity hereby commits itself to:

23.1 Inform governments and inter-governmental organisations throughout the world, including the Non-Aligned Movement, the United Nations General Assembly, the Security Council, the Commonwealth and others of these perspectives, and solicit their support.

23.2 Mandate the OAU ad-hoc committee on Southern Africa, acting as the representative of the OAU, assisted by the Frontline States, to remain seized of the issue of a political resolution to the South Africa question.

23.3 Step up all-round support for the South African liberation movement and campaign in the rest of the world in pursuance of this objective.

23.4 Intensify the campaign for mandatory and comprehensive sanctions against apartheid South Africa; in this regard, immediately mobilise against the re-scheduling of Pretoria's foreign debts; work for the imposition of a mandatory oil embargo and the full observance by all countries of the arms embargo.

23.5 Ensure that the African continent does not relax existing measures for the total isolation of apartheid South Africa.

23.6 Continue to monitor the situation in Namibia and extend all necessary support to SWAPO in its struggle for a genuinely independent Namibia.

23.7 Extend such assistance as the Governments of Angola and Mozambique may request in order to secure peace for their people.

23.8 Render all possible assistance to the Frontline States to enable them to withstand Pretoria's campaign of aggression and destabilisation and enable them to continue to give their all-round support to the people of Namibia and South Africa.

24. We appeal to all people of goodwill throughout the world to support this Programme of Action as a necessary measure to secure the earliest liquidation of the apartheid system and the transformation of South Africa into a united, democratic and non-racial country.

APPENDIX E

The Groote Schuur Minute (May, 1990)

The government and the African National Congress agree on a common commitment towards the resolution of the existing climate of violence and intimidation from whatever quarter as well as commitment to stability and to a peaceful process of negotiations.

Flowing from this commitment, the following was agreed upon:

1. The establishment of a working group to make recommendations on the definition of political offenses in the South African situation; to discuss, in this regard, time scales; and to advise on norms and mechanisms for dealing with the release of political prisoners and the granting of immunity in respect of political offenses to those inside and outside South Africa. All persons who may be affected will be considered. The working group will bear in mind experiences in Namibia and elsewhere. The working group will aim to complete work before 21st May 1990. It is understood that the South African government, in its discretion, may contact other political parties and movements and other relevant bodies. The proceedings of the working group will be confidential. In the meantime the following offenses will receive attention immediately:

- a) The leaving of the country without a valid travel document.
 - b) Any offenses related merely to organisations which were previously prohibited.
2. In addition to the arrangements mentioned in Paragraph 1, temporary immunity from prosecution for political offenses committed before today, will be considered on an urgent basis for members of the National Executive Committee and selected other members of the ANC from outside the country, to enable them to return and help with the establishment and management of political activities, to assist in bringing violence to an end and to take part in peaceful political negotiations.
 3. The government undertakes to review existing security legislation to bring it into line with the new dynamic situation developing in South Africa in order to ensure normal and free political activities.
 4. The government reiterates its commitment to work towards the lifting of the state of emergency. In this context, the ANC will exert itself to fulfill the objectives contained in the preamble.
 5. Efficient channels of communication between the government and the ANC will be established in order to curb violence and intimidation from whatever quarter effectively. The government and the ANC agree that the objectives contained within this minute should be achieved as early as possible.

APPENDIX F

The Pretoria Minute (August, 1990)

The government and the ANC have held discussions at the Presidency, Pretoria today, August 6, 1990.

1. The government and the ANC have again committed themselves to the Groote Schuur Minute.
2. The final report of the Working Group on political offenses dated 21 May 1990, as amended, was accepted by both parties. The guidelines to be formulated in terms of the Report will be applied in a phased manner. The Report makes provision for formulation of guidelines which will be applied in dealing with members of all organisations, groupings or institutions, governmental or otherwise, who committed offenses on the assumption that a particular cause was being served or opposed. The meeting has instructed the Working Group to draw up a plan for the release of ANC related prisoners and the granting to indemnity of people in a phased manner and to report before the end of August.

The following target dates have in the meantime been agreed upon:

- The body or bodies referred to in paragraph 8.2 of the Report of the Working Group will be constituted by 31 August 1990.

- The further release of prisoners which can be dealt with administratively will start on 1 September 1990.
- Indemnity which can be dealt with in categories of persons and not on an individual basis will be granted from 1 October 1990. This process will be completed not later than the end of 1990.
- In all cases where the body or bodies to be constituted according to paragraph 8.2 of the Report of the Working Group will have to consider cases on an individual basis, the process will be completed within six months, but the latest date envisaged for the completion of the total task in terms of the Report of the Working Group is not later than 30 April 1991. This programme will be implemented on the basis of the Report of the Working Group.

3. In the interest of moving as speedily as possible towards a negotiated peaceful political settlement and in the context of the agreements reached, the ANC announced that it was now suspending all armed actions with immediate effect. As a result of this, no further armed actions and related activities by the ANC and its military wing Umkhonto we Sizwe will take place.

It was agreed that a working group will be established to resolve all outstanding questions arising out of this decision to report by 15 September 1990. Both sides committed themselves once more to do everything in their power to bring about a peaceful solution as quickly as possible.

4. Both delegations expressed serious concern about the general level of violence, intimidation and unrest

in the country, especially Natal. They agreed that in the context of the common search for peace and stability, it was vital that understanding should grow among all sections of the South African population that problems can and should be solved through negotiations. Both parties committed themselves to undertake steps and measures to promote and expedite the normalisation and stabilisation of the situation in line with the spirit of mutual trust obtaining among the leaders involved.

5. With due cognisance of the interest, role and involvement of other parties the delegations consider it necessary that whatever additional mechanisms of communication are needed should be developed at local, regional and national levels. This should enable public grievances to be addressed peacefully and in good time, avoiding conflict.
6. The government has undertaken to consider the lifting of the State of Emergency in Natal as early as possible in light of positive consequences that should result from this Accord.
7. In view of the new circumstances now emerging there will be an ongoing review of security legislation. The Government will give immediate consideration to repealing all provisions of the Internal Security Act that:
 - a) refer to communism or the furthering thereof;
 - b) provide for a consolidated list;
 - c) provide for a prohibition on the publication of statements or writings of certain persons; and

d) provide for an amount to be deposited before a newspaper may be registered.

The Government will continue reviewing security legislation and its application to ensure free political activity and with the view to introducing amending legislation at the next session of Parliament. The Minister of Justice will issue a statement in this regard, inter alia, calling for comments and proposals.

8. We are convinced that what we have agreed upon today can become a milestone road to true peace and prosperity for our country. In this we do not pretend to be the parties involved in the process of shaping the new South Africa. We know there are parties committed to peaceful progress. All of us can henceforth walk that road in consultation and co-operation with each other. We call upon all those who have not yet committed themselves to peaceful negotiations to do so now.
9. Against this background, the way is now open to proceed to negotiation on a new constitution. Exploratory talks in this regard will be held before the next meeting which will be held soon.

APPENDIX G

Negotiations: A Strategic Perspective (November, 1992)

Note: As adopted by the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress

The strategic perspective of the ANC is the transfer of power from the white minority regime to the people as a whole. This will usher in a new era characterised by the complete eradication of the system of apartheid, fundamental socio-economic transformation, peace and stability for all our people. The basic principle underpinning this new order is democratic majority rule.

I. Balance of Forces

By the end of the eighties, the strategic balance of forces was characterised by:

1.1 The liberation movement enjoyed many advantages over the regime, both internally and internationally. All the pillars of the struggle had grown from strength to strength:

- a very high level of mass mobilisation and mass defiance had rendered apartheid unworkable;
- the building of the underground had laid the basis for exercising political leadership and was laying a basis for the intensification of the armed struggle.

- the world was united against apartheid.

1.2 At the same time the liberation movement faced certain objective weaknesses:

- changes in Southern Africa were making it increasingly difficult for the ANC in the conduct of struggle;
- there was no longer a visible intensification of the armed struggle;
- the international community was making renewed attempts to impose a settlement plan.

1.3 The crisis in Eastern Europe, and the resultant changes in the relations between world powers brought the issue of a negotiated resolution of regional conflicts to the fore.

In this context, South Africa was not going to be treated as an exception. Importantly, these changes also exerted new pressures on the regime to fall in line with the emerging international "culture" of multi-party democracy.

1.4 The apartheid power bloc was no longer able to rule in the old way. Its policies of repression and reform had failed dismally; and it faced an ever-deepening socio-economic crisis. At the same time the liberation movement did not have the immediate capacity to overthrow the regime.

1.5 All these factors set the stage for a negotiated resolution to the south African conflict. The regime was forced to unban the ANC and other organisations, release Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners, acknowledge the defeat of the apartheid

- the regime's camp stands more divided than it ever was since the unbanning of the ANC; its unpatriotic front with some Bantustans has collapsed: it is increasingly losing the loyalty of the civil service and important elements in the security forces, many of whom are drifting to the extreme right-wing camp; in the October special session of the tricameral parliament, it failed to secure the support of a single other party outside itself: leading members of the party and
- the De Klerk regime has suffered a renewed crisis of legitimacy. It continues to fail to win the allegiance of the majority.

2.2 In the recent period:

- The liberation movement seeks to weaken the capacity of the regime to act against the people and broaden the space for free political activity through a combination of mass mobilisation, international pressure, and self-defence.
- The regime strives to undermine and weaken the liberation movement through its strategy of low-intensity conflict and the beginnings of counter-revolutionary war.
- The balance of forces is not static. In this phase of the negotiations:

II. Shifts in the Balance of Forces

ideology and seek negotiations with the liberation movement. This constituted a major strategic retreat for the regime and a victory for the democratic sources.

government continue to jump ship for reasons of "fatigue", "depression" and "disillusionment".

- the regime has lost all ability to arrest the unprecedented socio-economic decline, growing unemployment among both black and white, the general social disintegration and spiraling crime.

However:

- the regime still commands vast state and other military resources;
- It continues to enjoy the support of powerful economic forces;
- objectivity, counter-revolutionary violence and the growing potential for long-term counter-revolutionary instability, acts as a resource for the regime.

2.3 Also in the recent period:

- the ANC has established itself as a legal national political organisation;
- it commands the support of the majority of South Africans;
- the liberation movement enjoys the capacity to mobilise large-scale mass action;
- it is able to influence and mobilise the international community.

However:

the liberation movement suffers many organisational weaknesses;

it does not command significant military and financial resources;

it is unable to militarily defeat the counter-revolutionary movement or adequately defend the people.

- 2.4 As a result of mass action and negotiations, some progress has been made in the recent period. Some examples of these are: the CODESA Declaration of Intent (which establishes national consensus on the broad direction in which the political process should unfold); the Record of Understanding; and broad consensus on the need for an Interim Government and Constituent Assembly.

Though the regime has succeeded in delaying the transition, there remains a ground swell of support within society as a whole for a speedy resolution of the political and socio-economic problems.

- 2.5 In this context, the liberation movement is faced with various options:

resumption of the armed struggle and the perspective of revolutionary seizure of power;

mass action and international pressure within the broad context of negotiations, until the balance of forces is shifted to such an extent that we secure a negotiated surrender from the regime;

a negotiations process combined with mass action and international pressure which takes into account the need to combat counter-revolutionary forces and at the same time use phases in the transition to qualitatively change the balance of forces in order

to secure a thorough-going democratic transformation.

2.6 These options should be weighed against the following background:

- The ANC's National Conference resolved, after weighing various factors - including the possibility of a negotiated resolution of the South African conflict and the objective situation outlined in Section I above - that the option of armed seizure of power was neither preferable nor viable at that juncture. The current situation does not warrant a review of this decision of National Conference.
- An approach that aims to secure a negotiated surrender from the regime will entail a protracted process with tremendous cost to the people and the country.

2.7 Taking into account:

- the capacity of the liberation movement;
- the capacity of the regime to endlessly delay, while consolidating its hold onto power and restructuring in order to undermine future democratic transformation;
- the cost to the people and the country of a protracted negotiations process;
- the need to, as urgently as possible, address the dire socio-economic needs of the people;
- the need to prevent a further consolidation of the counter-revolutionary forces;

- the third option, is the most viable and preferable.

2.8 The liberation movement, however, should guard against being captive to a given approach. A combination of factors, including the conduct of the regime may dictate a need to revisit our approach.

Apart from the first two options, this may also include a much more enhanced role for the international community in the negotiations process.

III. Negotiations: The Preferred Option of the Liberation Movement

3.1 A peaceful political settlement has always been the first option of the liberation movement. It was only when the prospect of any peaceful settlement vanished that we adopted the perspective of an armed revolutionary seizure of power.

On the other hand, for the regime, it was a failure of arms that imposed the obligation to concede the need for a political settlement.

3.2 Negotiations therefore represent a victory for the democratic movement and a defeat for the forces of apartheid.

3.3 Consequently, it must remain one of our strategic tasks to continue to draw the regime onto the terrain of free political activity, peaceful democratic action and genuine negotiations.

3.4 Delays in the process of peaceful transformation are not in the interests of the masses who seek liberation now, and do not enhance our possibilities

to erect the transformation to genuine democracy as effectively and as speedily as we should.

IV. Phases of the Democratic Revolution

- 4.1 Our strategic perspective should take into account that the democratic revolution - for the attainment of majority rule - will proceed in various phases. Our possibilities relevant to each phase should not be pursued in a manner that produces defeats later because of a failure to recognise the dialectical inter-connection between various phases.
- 4.2 This strategic perspective should recognise the following phases, each one of which has its regularities and objective and subjective demands:

PHASE 1: The period prior to the establishment of the Transitional Executive Council. (In this phase we should aim to: secure an agreement on free and fair elections. Interim Government and Constituent Assembly; stop unilateral restructuring; broaden the space for free political activity; and address the issue of violence).

PHASE 2: The period from the establishment of the Transitional Executive Council leading up to the election of the Constituent Assembly and the establishment of an Interim Government of National Unity. (In this phase we should aim to: consolidate peace through joint control over all armed forces; ensure free and fair elections; and mobilise for a decisive victory in the elections).

PHASE 3: The period of the drafting and adoption of the new constitution by the Constituent Assembly. (In this phase we should aim to: establish an Interim Government in which the ANC

would be a major player; adopt a new democratic constitution; and start addressing the socio-economic problems facing the country).

PHASE 4: The period of the phasing in of the new constitution, which will include the restructuring of the state machinery and the general dismantling of the system of apartheid.

PHASE 5: The period of the consolidation of the process of democratic transformation and reconstruction.

- 4.3 At all stages, we should consider carefully the balance of forces, how to change that balance, and therefore place ourselves in a position in which we can determine the correct path to follow to further the process of democratic change. In this context, the broad masses should play a decisive role. The process must be mass-driven.
- 4.4 The balance of forces, our specific objectives and our long-term goals would, at each stage, dictate the need to: enter into specific, and perhaps changing, alliances; and make certain compromises in order to protect and advance this process.

V. Goals of the National Liberation Struggle and our Immediate Objectives

- 5.1 The fundamental goal of the National Liberation Struggle is the transfer to power of the people as a whole and the establishment of a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society. This should not be confused with the immediate objectives we set for ourselves in each phase of the transition. At the same time, we should ensure that the immediate

objectives we pursue do not have the effect of blocking our longer-term goals.

- 5.2 The objectives we set, and can attain in each phase, will depend on the balance of forces.
- 5.3 We must ensure that in entering a new phase (e.g. the establishment of an Interim Government) the balance of forces is transformed qualitatively in favour of the Democratic Movement. Negotiations can therefore result in the possibility of bringing about a radically transformed political framework (i.e. changing the conjuncture) in which the struggle for the achievement of the strategic perspectives of the National Democratic Revolution will be advanced in more favourable conditions.
- 5.4 In setting objectives for the present round of negotiations, we must bear in mind that in the main, one would not achieve at the table, that which one cannot achieve on the ground. Depending on the balance of forces, we might not gain everything we set out to achieve. However, positions we adopt should be informed by our longer-term objectives. Our correct assessment of the balance of forces, the support of the masses and good negotiation tactics, should ensure that our gains constitute a decisive leap forward.
- 5.5 In setting objectives today, our strategy should not focus narrowly on only the initial establishment of democracy, but also (and perhaps more importantly) on how to nurture, develop and consolidate that democracy. Our strategy must at once also focus on ensuring that the new democracy is not undermined.

5.6 Our broad objectives for the first two phases (as distinct from longer-term goals) should therefore be:

- the establishment of a democratic constitution-making process;
- ending the National Party's monopoly of political power;
- ensuring a continuing link between democracy and socio-economic empowerment, minimising the threat to stability and the democratic process.

VI. Engaging the National Party Regime

6.1 The objective reality imposes a central role for the ANC and the National Party in the transition. The ANC is the custodian of the peace process - while the NP is the party in power. Using various forms of struggle, we must ensure that the regime accepts movement forward in the process.

6.2 This means that balance of forces has forced onto the South African political situation a relationship between the ANC and National Party characterised by:

- in the first place conflict in so far as the regime attempts to block the transition, and,
- secondly, constructive interaction in pursuit of agreements the regime has been forced to enter into.

6.3 How to manage this contradiction in one of our challenges of leadership.

VII. The Need for a Government of National Unity

- 7.1 We have already won the demand for an Interim Government of National Unity.
- 7.2 However, we also need to accept the fact that even after the adoption of a new constitution, the balance of forces and the interests of the country as a whole may still require of us to consider the establishment of a Government of National Unity - provided that it does not delay or obstruct the process of orderly transition to majority rule and that the parties that have lost the elections will not be able to paralyse the functioning of government. This is fundamentally different to an approach to power-sharing which entrenches veto powers for minority parties.
- 7.3 Some objectives of a Government of National Unity:
- stability during the period of transition to full democracy; the enemies of democracy will try to destabilise the new government and make democracy unworkable.
 - commitment to, and responsibility for, the process: we should seek, especially in the early stages, to commit all parties to actively take part in the process of dismantling apartheid - building democracy and promoting development in the interest of all.

VIII. Laying the Basis to Minimise the Threat to Stability and Democracy

- 8.1 The new democratic government would need to adopt a wide range of measures in order to minimise the threat to the new democracy. However, some of these

measures may have to be part and parcel of a negotiated settlement. The new government will also need to take into account the need to employ the talents and capacities of all South Africans, as well as the time it will take to implement an urgent programme of advancing the skills of those who have all along been deprived.

- 8.2 Strategic forces we need to consider right now are the SADF, SAP, all other armed formations and the civil service in general. If the transition to democracy affects all the individuals in these institutions wholly and purely negatively, then they would serve as fertile ground from which the destabilisers would recruit.
- 8.3 Not only do these forces have vast potential to destabilise a fledgling democracy in the future, but as importantly, they have the potential to delay the transition for a lengthy period of time or even make serious attempts to subvert the transition.
- 8.4 A democratic government will need to restructure the civil service and the security forces in order to ensure that:
- they are professionally competent and accountable;
 - they are representative of society as a whole (including through the application of the principle of affirmative action);
 - they have the interests of democracy; and,
 - the size of these institutions is determined by the objective needs of the country.

In this process it may be necessary to address the question of job security, retrenchment packages and a general amnesty based on disclosure and justice at some stage, as part of a negotiated settlement. These measures will need to apply to all armed formations and sections of the civil service. However, the availability of resources and experiences of other countries need to be taken into account.

- 8.5 It is also necessary to consider other potential counter-revolutionary forces and find ways of engaging them and their mass base in the effort to build a democratic society.
- 8.6 One of basic guarantees of stability will be the implementation of development programmes to meet the legitimate need and aspirations of the majority of South Africans. This places a serious responsibility on the ANC to determine the priorities for democratic socio-economic transformation.

IX. Reaching the Negotiated Settlement

- 9.1 Some elements of the final negotiated settlement would take the form of multi-lateral (CODESA-type agreements). Other elements of the settlement package would take the form of bilateral agreements between the ANC and the NP - such agreements would bind the two parties.
- 9.2 The thorny question of the powers, functions and boundaries of regions in the new South Africa may be an issue on which we would enter into bilateral discussion with the NP and other parties and seek to reach an understanding that the parties would pursue in the Constituent Assembly.

- 9.3 The question of a Government of National Unity after the adoption of a new constitution and the future of members of the security forces and the civil service could be dealt with through direct engagement with these forces, as part of a bilateral agreement or in multi-lateral agreements.

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This bibliography includes a full list of books and articles cited in the endnotes of the text as well as those referred to in the course of research as background material. Full citations for material not included in the bibliography are provided in the notes. For purposes of clarity this bibliography also includes separate lists of newspaper and journal titles, unpublished papers and mimeos and primary source material.

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