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ANC Discussion Document on the Reconfiguration of ANC-SACP-COSATU-SANCO Alliance

21 November 2018

INTRODUCTION

1. This discussion document of the ANC is intended to provide a framework for discussion within the ANC on a 'reconfigured' alliance, as contained in the recent SACP and COSATU national congress resolutions and the recently published SACP document titled, *Towards a Reconfigured Alliance: The Second Radical Phase of the National Democratic Revolution* (hereinafter referred to as July 2018 SACP Discussion Paper).
2. This document starts by laying out the distinct, but related roles of the organisations constituting the Alliance, followed by outlining the SACP and COSATU resolutions and perspectives chronologically in order to situate the ANC's response. This is followed by a very brief historical context and evolution of the Alliance; followed by the post-apartheid context within which the Alliance operates. Thereafter, the document presents a few international experiences of left parties and trade unions. To locate the global challenges facing our Alliance and possible electoral pact, the ANC document discusses the power dynamics between labour and capital in the current era of globalisation also characterized by the rise of economic nationalism in the global north. Finally, the document makes a few suggestions on the reconfiguration of the Alliance and its operations in order to serve the people of South Africa better.

OUR STARTING PREMISE

3. Our starting point is that the ANC has a critical responsibility to lead the process of transformation in our country, and that it does so in partnership with revolutionary democratic forces and broader civil society. In the words of the Ekurhuleni Declaration:

'Unity, a sense of common purpose, the depth of understanding of our historical mission, activism, loyalty to the people – especially the poor – and commitment to international solidarity and joint action are some of the critical attributes that have placed the alliance at the head of the forces of change in our country'.

4. Furthermore, we also move from the 54th ANC Conference resolution which stated that *'we must continue to build a strong Alliance and urgently convene a political council of the Alliance to develop a structured programme, to discuss the different positions held by Alliance partners on the configuration of the Alliance'.*
5. The 54th ANC Given that state power also positions the ANC as an employer of millions of workers, how do we manage the tensions that this relationship is bound to occasion and, inversely, how should workers located in state institutions pursue their sectoral interests at the same time as they fulfil the broader task of social transformation?
6. National Congress further resolved that the Alliance must be anchored: *'on a clear and simple minimum platform with a programme of action that is implemented and monitored'.*
7. More importantly, this discussion paper is also based on the old established premise that revolutionary organisations are necessary to resolve fundamental social antagonisms. Our main mission as the Alliance has been to end apartheid colonialism and replace it with a national democratic society



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based on non-racialism, non-sexism, unity, prosperity and development. The interest and commitment to end the system of colonialism brought together national revolutionary democrats, socialists and communists – reflecting the interests of the mass of the oppressed people against national oppression, class super-exploitation and patriarchy. It is for this reason the organisational forms of these revolutionary streams took the form of the ANC, SACP and trade union movement (SACTU and later COSATU) and SANCO.

8. As distinct, but related organisations and different components of the Alliance, our organisations were structured based on certain factors. These included *who* had to be organised, around *what* interests and issues; and their respective *immediate* and *long-term* goals.

9. The SACP was established to organise the working class as a whole around the NDR as its immediate program and objective; and communism as its ultimate goal. In carrying out the NDR, which demands the broad alliance of all classes and strata, particularly amongst the nationally oppressed, the working class should play a leading role. The strategic rationale for working class leadership is derived from the structural location and capacity of the working class to bring about social change, including in the installation, consolidation, defence and advance of the democratic revolution. In further justifying why the working class should lead all classes and strata in the national democratic revolution, the ANC argues in its 2017 Strategy and Tactics document that such an approach:

'...is not an assertion of ideological preference; but a reflection of social reality. Because of their position in the economy and other social endeavours, the mass of the workers makes society tick. In the mines, the factories, the banks, state-owned enterprises, the courts, public and private security agencies, government departments, parliament, private homes and so on, they carry the burdens of society. They have, over the years, developed a keen sense of their aspirations and those of broader society; and have organised and mobilised for thoroughgoing change.'

10. V.I Lenin in his text, *Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*, reached a strategic conclusion that the working class, should not:

'...allow the leadership of the revolution to be assumed by the bourgeoisie, but on the contrary, to take a most energetic part in it, to fight most resolutely... for the revolution to be carried to its conclusion'.

11. The trade union movement's *primary* role is to organise workers around better conditions of employment. Of course, COSATU as a politically-conscious trade union federation understands that the fight for better wages and better working conditions, takes place in a political and economic system. Therefore, in its struggle for better working conditions, it has combined this with efforts to end oppressive political, exploitative economic and social systems such as apartheid colonialism and capitalism, in pursuit of a socialist society.

12. The ANC organises and mobilises people from all racial, ethnic, gender and class backgrounds to construct a National Democratic society to which all components of the Alliance are committed. This is well captured in the 2002 Alliance Summit held at Ekurhuleni, which stated that

'The primary task of this epoch is the creation of a national democratic society. All the classes and strata which share this objective, as well as the schools of thought found in the democratic movement, see this as their current strategic objective. There is one NDR, at the core of which is



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the liberation of black people in general and Africans in particular. Among these classes and strata, the working class is the leading motive force.'

RECENT COSATU & SACP RESOLUTIONS

13. As shown in the recent 2018 SACP Discussion Paper, the 1928 Native Republic set the strategic and theoretical basis for the current SACP-ANC-COSATU Alliance. In the recent congresses starting from 2005-2006 both COSATU and the SACP have passed resolutions calling for a significant restructuring (or 'reconfiguration') of the alliance, including in the form of an electoral pact.

14. Within COSATU, the idea of an Alliance Pact was first broached in its 1993 Special Congress, which suggested the RDP as the basis for such a pact.

15. COSATU's 9th National Congress resolved in September 2006

'To initiate a debate within the Alliance in the build-up to the 2007 ANC conference and the SACP 11th Congress around the restructuring of the Alliance to make it an effective tool for social transformation.

This debate should include ... the need for a more structured "pact" between the parties, with conditions and agreed minimum goals. This should include agreements on deployments and quotas for representation of the different Alliance partners at every level, with independent caucuses and the power of recall to ensure accountability'.¹

16. Taking forward its 9th National Congress resolution, the COSATU central committee concluded that the Alliance:

'...must enter into some form of pact that would enable the Alliance to influence government. This pact must strengthen and unify the Alliance so as to turn the second decade of democracy into a decade for the working class.

The Central Committee now resolves that the Alliance must be reconfigured along the lines of the 'Framework for an Alliance Governance and Elections Pact' discussion document...

...a Protocol governing alliance relations must be developed. In addition, an Alliance Electoral Pact or Programme for transformation should be developed on policies required to achieve the goals of social transformation, employment creation and eradication of poverty.'²

17. The 2005 SACP Special National Congress (SNC) resolved that:

'... that the Central Committee must establish a commission to investigate the SACP's relationship to state power in the current period and into the future, including the question of whether the SACP should consider contesting elections in its own right.'

¹ COSATU: Resolutions of the 9th National Congress, 18-21 September, 2006: Resolution 1.1.

² Declaration of the 4th Central Committee, Ekurhuleni, 17-20 September 2007



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The SACP Bua Komanisi May 2006 document following abovementioned 2005 Special National Congress (SNC) states that:

'ANC deployment of communist cadres in government and the alliance remain crucial arenas for building capacity for and momentum towards socialism.'

18. In the same breath, the Bua Komanisi document further show dissatisfaction with the way the alliance has been functioning since 1996, arguing that:

'In fact, it has been some frustrations on these terrains since 1996 (and indeed achievements through our independent campaigns) that partly explain a call from within some in our ranks for an independent electoral path for the SACP.'

19. In 2007 at its National Congress, the SACP stated that:

'The alliance requires major reconfiguration if the NDR is to be advanced, deepened and defended, and if we are to achieve the SACP's medium term vision objectives of building working class hegemony in all sites of power, including the state.'

That this reconfiguration of the Alliance must include the following elements: (a) the Alliance must establish itself as a strategic political centre; (b) this political centre must develop a common capacity to drive strategy, broad policy, campaigns, deployment and accountability

At the same time, this reconfiguration of the Alliance must respect the independent role and strategic tasks of each of the alliance partners.'

20. On this basis, the 2007 SACP Congress resolved:

'To mandate the incoming CC to actively pursue the different potential modalities of future SACP electoral campaigning. These modalities could involve either:

- *An electoral pact with our Alliance partners, which could include agreement on deployments, possible quotas, the accountability of elected representatives including accountability of SACP cadres to the Party, the election manifesto, and the importance of an independent face and role for the SACP and its cadres within electoral lists; or*
- *Independent electoral lists on the voter's roll with the possible objective of constituting a coalition Alliance agreement post elections.*

The SACP must actively engage its Alliance partners on these proposals. The incoming CC must convene a policy conference within a year, in order to assess the feasibility, and potential advantages and disadvantages of the different modalities noted above, including further detailed research.³

21. The SACP saw the outcomes of the ANC 52nd National Congress in the positive light and stated that :

³ SACP 12th National Congress Resolutions, 'Composite Resolution on the SACP and State Power'.



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22. *The outcome of the ANC's Polokwane Conference (both its electoral and policy resolution outcomes) created space for what the SACP's resolution had called for - a "reconfigured alliance". After the 52nd ANC National Congress the Alliance Summit convened in 2008 affirmed the Alliance as a strategic centre of power, without providing concrete meaning and mechanism through which this would be a reality except to reaffirm the 2002 Alliance Summit resolution that:*

- a. The Alliance secretariat should meet twice a month;
- b. The extended secretariat plus Presidency should meet monthly;
- c. The officials should meet every two months;
- d. The Ten-a-Side should meet twice yearly; and
- e. There should be one Alliance Summit annually.

23. The 2008 Alliance also called for the implementation of the Ekurhuleni I and II decisions.

24. Between 2008 to around 2015, the discussion on the reconfiguration of the Alliance seems to have subsided within the SACP and COSATU because it was believed that a new political climate had emerged. As a result, the focus had been on trying to ensure that the Alliance Council worked. During this period, the presence of the SACP leaders in economic-related departments (appointed in their own right as ANC members and leaders) also increased. But the SACP's extra-parliamentary work around working class issues also significantly declined, which set the necessary political and organizational conditions for pseudo-left forces to occupy the political and ideological space in society. It is in this period that the annual SACP-led Red October campaigns became once-off events without any sustained mass-based campaigns of the yesteryears. Indeed, as the ANC we should be the first to admit that since 1994, we have not been very active in mass campaigns around the interests of ordinary people. Without reducing the SACP to a mere issue-based campaigning organization with no interest in state power, we should also ask whether the organizational capacity of the SACP to build working class consciousness and its ability to embed itself in sustained working class campaigns has been affected by its organizational redesign?

25. The Report of the Commission, released in 2016, argues:

'While the proposed modalities for such independent contesting varied - generally those advancing the call suggested that an independent SACP list should be in selected municipalities (not everywhere); that the objective would be to contest "within the context of the Alliance"; and therefore, to seek some kind of coalition agreement with the ANC AFTER the election. The proposal was presented, therefore, as "NOT being an attempt to break the alliance". The SACP CC noted these arguments, but viewed them as unrealistic. In a situation in which there were extreme tensions WITHIN the ANC over the list nominations process, the idea that there could be some localised "gentlemen's agreement" between the SACP and ANC on separate lists was seen as utopian'.

26. The 2017 SACP National Congress resolved that the SACP's contest of the general elections, 'may, or may not be, within the umbrella of a re-configured Alliance'. However, the SACP is committed to 'a



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revolutionary national democratic Alliance, and a re-configured Alliance that re-affirms, in policy as well as in practice, the ANC's own 2007 National Conference resolution that "The Alliance is the strategic political center" (and not the ANC on its own'.

27. The 2017 SACP National Congress further resolved that:

'That both for electoral purposes and for defending, deepening and advancing a radical second phase of the NDR, the SACP must play an active and leadership role in the consolidation of a left popular front of working class and progressive forces.

That to take all of this work forward, the 14th Congress mandates the Central Committee to establish a Road Map that must be adopted, with clear, indicative time-lines, by the forthcoming Augmented CC. This Road Map must include the following elements:

- A programme of active engagements with our Alliance partners, and with a wide range of working class and progressive forces to share and to test the SACP's perspectives. Particular, but not exclusive, attention must be paid to COSATU and its affiliates. These engagements must be at all levels, national, provincial and local. Based on these engagements, the SACP must play a leading role in developing a common platform for a Left Popular Front of working class and progressive forces.*
- Linked to the SACP's organisational renewal review process, conduct a thorough and ongoing audit of the SACP's organisational capacity, involving a scientific, fact-based evaluation of the strength and influence of our formations, including of our VD- based branches. Regular reports must be tabled in each Central Committee and lower structures must be continuously briefed on progress. The Special National Congress of the SACP must receive a comprehensive report on the Road Map process and resolve on the way forward'.*

28. With respect to the resolutions of COSATU and the SACP, till around 2015:

- a. Both approaches affirm the alliance as a 'political centre' which determines the ANC's election manifesto, programme in government and deployment of cadreship across all spheres of the state.*
- b. In some interpretations this amounted to a call for an alliance platform to contest elections in place of the current practice where an ANC platform mobilises with the support of alliance partners. This interpretation questions the notion that the NDR is organisationally led by the ANC except at a purely rhetorical level.*
- c. The Pact (and/or reconfiguration of the alliance) is regarded as integral to a shift in the trajectory of the NDR towards a socialist orientation in which the working class is (more) hegemonic.*

29. The 2017 SACP National Congress was qualitatively different from other previous resolutions in many respects.



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- a. Firstly, it began to define the Left Front beyond the ANC, notwithstanding COSATU's calls for a Conference of the Left the previous year.
 - b. Secondly, the 2017 SACP Congress resolution suggests that the SACP's contestation of the elections: *'may or may not be, within the umbrella of a reconfigured Alliance'*.
 - c. Thirdly, the SACP contested 21 councillors seats during the local government by-elections at Metsimaholo Local Municipality in the Free State province, and obtained three seats. The ANC's electoral support was reduced by 3 seats compared to the 2016 municipal elections.
 - d. Fourthly, for the first time, the ANC President was not allowed to address official gatherings of COSATU.
30. At the same time, the COSATU in its 13 National Congress held in September 2018 reaffirmed: *'its position to support the African National Congress (ANC) in 2019 national general elections... and the need for a reconfigured Alliance, which will include a minimum quota in its leadership structures for SACP and COSATU cadres at all levels as a minimum requirement'*.
31. Both proposals contain 'escape clauses' which would allow for a different course of action if the ANC does not agree to the pact or some similar reconfiguration of the alliance. COSATU's 13th Congress resolution stated that: *'If the radical reconfiguration of the alliance fails, COSATU, shall beyond the 2019 elections work to deepen its work to strengthen the SACP as a political insurance of the working class and mobilise for its decisive electoral victory'*.
32. The 2016 SACP in its *Ten-Ten Scenario* document, projected that if the Alliance is not reconfigured, the 2017 SACP National Congress can lead a process of establishing People's Front or Coalition to unite forces within and outside the ANC to *'save the revolution'* consistent with the 2017 SACP Congress resolution.
33. However, it should be noted that the 13th COSATU National Congress resolutions will still be subjected to finalisation by the CEC meeting to be held in November 2018. Also worth noting is the fact that the SACP has warmly welcomed the 54th ANC conference outcomes, and believes that there is a better environment for a discussion on the reconfiguration of the Alliance.
34. In light of the above, it is critical for the ANC to begin considering its response to these resolutions, and engage with their content as early as possible.

MODE OF ALLIANCE OPERANDI PRE-1994: THE ALLIANCE AS "A LIVING ORGANISM"

35. Historically, we have regarded the relationship between the three streams of the national liberation struggle in our country – the revolutionary democratic, the socialist and the trade union movements – as a strategic alliance aimed at eliminating the legacy of colonialism in its various manifestations as earlier indicated
36. Comrade O.R. Tambo captured the essence of this approach at the SACP's 60th Anniversary:



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'Ours is not merely a paper alliance, created at conference tables and formalised through the signing of documents and representing only an agreement of leaders. Our alliance is a living organism that has grown out of struggle. We have built it out of our separate and common experiences.

*It has been nurtured by our endeavours to counter the total offensive mounted by the National Party in particular against all opposition and against the very concept of democracy. It has been strengthened through resistance to the vicious onslaught against both the ANC and the SACP by the Pretoria regime; it has been fertilised by the blood of the countless heroes; many of them are unnamed and unsung. It has been reinforced by a common determination to destroy the enemy and by our shared belief in the certainty of victory.'*⁴

37. Our experience of working together as an alliance is broad and varied. When engaging with the challenge of alliance unity in the recent past, many of us rightly draw on our rich and varied history, including from above OR Tambo's characterization of the origins and characterisation of the Alliance:

- a. In the 1950s the Congress Alliance mobilised the broad unity of progressive and democratic forces, including a growing non-racial trade union movement. The CPSA, reconstituted as an underground SACP, continued its participation in the front ranks of the liberation movement. Many leaders and members of the SACP and the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU, formed in 1955) also occupied positions at various levels of the ANC and the Congress Alliance made up of the ANC, the South African Indian Congress (SAIC), the South African Congress of Democrats (SACOD) and South African Coloured People's Organisation (SACPO).
- b. The formation of the ANC-SACP-COSATU also has its organizational roots in the 1950s. The National Action Council created in March 1954 at a planning conference for the Congress of the People (CoP) was made up of eight members from each of the four sponsoring organisations – the ANC, the South African Indian Congress (SAIC), the South African Congress of Democrats (SACOD) and South African Coloured People's Organisation (SACPO). Key decisions and campaigns of the second half of the 1950s such as the April 1958 3-day strike were decided jointly. Even the decision to form MK was taken to a structure known as the Joint Executives after the All-in-Conference held in 25 March 1961 in Pietermaritzburg.⁵
- c. Following the banning of the ANC and the suppression of SACTU, the Congress Alliance was forced to adapt. Through the formation of Umkhonto weSizwe and reorganisation of the movement in the underground, exile and prison there was increased intersection of ANC, SACTU and SACP membership and leadership to pursue the struggle around the four pillars: armed struggle, the underground, international isolation and mass mobilisation. This was further cemented with the opening up of ANC membership (1969) and leadership (1985) to 'non-Africans'.
- d. In this context, the SACP operated as a socialist vanguard party, conducting its work mostly in a 'dual underground' fashion: while it had a recognised senior leadership and some independent network of structures within the country and in exile, it also conducted itself as an underground formation within the broad liberation movement. The accent of its work was mainly to impact on

⁴ O.R. Tambo: Speech at Meeting to Observe the 60th Anniversary of the South African Communist Party, London, July 30, 1981

⁵ Mandela: *Long Walk to Freedom*, 1994.



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the outlook of the liberation movement on the content of the NDR and its relationship to socialism, while at the same time recognising that the anti-colonial struggle required a broad national liberation front.

- a. It is under these conditions that the informal organisational relationship between the ANC, SACP and SACTU was forged. Members and leaders of both the SACP and SACTU participated at various levels of the ANC in their own right, including in Umkhonto weSizwe. Under these difficult conditions of illegality, the ANC was not a final arbiter on the Congress Alliance strategic matters. The Alliance was institutionalized through structures such as the senior command of Umkhonto weSizwe, the Revolutionary Council and its successor, the Politico-Military Council.
- e. During the mass ferment from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s, the underground ANC and SACP worked in and with a range of mass formations, whilst pursuing the common programme of armed and other forms of struggle. The formation of the UDF and COSATU in the mid-1980s harked back to the earlier period of mass mobilisation, albeit under different conditions. Deliberate efforts were undertaken to ensure that these formations were guided by the revolutionary outlook of the Congress Movement.

38. At first sight, it would be easy to dismiss the above COSATU and SACP congress positions as being completely at odds with this historical approach to the alliance. The idea of an election pact appears to be a proposal to establish '*a paper alliance created at conference tables and formalised through the signing of documents*'. The emphasis on electoral pacts (which in the SACP's view could even emerge after separate election campaigns on the basis of separate party lists) is on the face of it a call to end the strategic alliance in favour of tactical cooperation on selected issues.

39. However, as leader of the alliance, the ANC is duty-bound to engage with the underlying subjective concerns as well as the objective basis of these resolutions. Rather than a knee-jerk rejection, the ANC should seek to build a comprehensive response which builds the unity of the alliance and advances the goals of a better life for all South Africans.

40. In doing so, we would need to ask the question of whether the perspectives outlined by comrade OR in 1981 remain valid today. In particular, we should ask:

- i. Does a common strategic vision, a sense of common purpose rooted in a shared understanding of our historical mission continue to exist?
- ii. Even if such a common strategic vision does exist, does this constitute an adequate basis for the challenges posed to the alliance by the tasks of the current phase of the NDR?

POST-1994 CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THE ALLIANCE OPERATES

41. The 1994 April breakthrough elevated the ANC to the position of the governing party in government; and ushered in an entirely new terrain of struggle which presented new possibilities and challenges to our strategy and tactics; as well as new objective conditions under which the Alliance operated. To begin with, post-1994 the democratic movement obtained elements of state power, but under two conditions that were not of our own making. These conditions included the negotiated compromises with the apartheid establishment. Secondly, the democratic movement took elements of state power under the dominance of neo-liberal global capitalism. The global context within which the



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Alliance operates is further elaborated on in the section of this paper: *'Capital and Labour in a Post-Apartheid, Globally Integrated South Africa'*.

42. In the course of pursuing the goals of reconstruction and socio-economic development, the democratic movement as led by the ANC had to engage strategically with private capital. As the ANC, we have conceptualised relationship between the national democratic state and private capital in general as one of 'unity and struggle', co-operation and contestation. This meant access to elements of state power which provided the democratic movement with the possibility to discipline the markets and capital, but without eliminating capital in general. The disciplining of capital or the market was meant to produce progressive socio-economic developmental outcomes as well as racial and gender equity through changing ownership, control and structure of the Colonialism of a Special Type (CST) economy. Instead, it would seem that national and globally established capital has disproportionately disciplined the democratic state through cajoling the government to adopt more market-friendly policies such as trade liberalization which reduced the size of the South African manufacturing industry; and allowed established big business to list internationally.

43. However, the democratic state has been successfully in disciplining capital to achieve some racial equity through policies such as Affirmative Action and Black Economic Empowerment (BEE), which set conducive conditions for the creation of sizeable sections of a large and small black capitalist class, some of whom also have equity shares in established companies in certain sectors of the economy. The equity policies have also increased the size of the black middle class within the state and private sector. The state has also been successful in using limited revenue from tax to finance social welfare, and socio-economic infrastructure programs.

44. The strength of the labour movement with the support of the ANC, led to the adoption of progressive labour laws that protect workers, albeit these laws are being undermined by legal and illegal labour immigration into South Africa, casualization and unemployment which have increased intra-working class competition for jobs and social services, thus undermining working class solidarity and its capacity to organize and fight.

45. Consistent with the established practice that the ANC is the organizational leader of the Alliance, the post-1994 ANC became organizational electoral representative of the NDR motive forces in which Alliance partners were on the ANC electoral lists in their own right as members and leaders of the ANC and under ANC discipline. Organizational management and engagement of the Alliance has been through the Alliance Secretariat, Political Councils and Summits. The ANC has also sought to ensure representation of the SACP and COSATU within its structures such as NEC Sub-committees, including the Deployment Committee (in which all partners had earlier been represented). Since 2007, the Alliance Political Council and Summits have been used as platforms to deepen consultation, monitoring and evaluating policy implementation and review as well as debating and assessing the balance of forces on a continuous basis. If weaknesses have manifested themselves in actual practice, have we sufficiently interrogated the root causes?

46. Whilst access to the state provided the NDR motive forces and the democratic movement with some of the levers of state power to transform society, it also generated two internal conflicts within the democratic movement over the appropriate policies to discipline capital and the market in order to produce progressive socio-economic developmental outcomes and broad-based equity. Secondly,



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access to state power also become a ladder to government positions and access to state resources, which in turn generated factionalism within the ANC and between the ANC and its Allies. Holding a leadership position in one organ of the Alliance presented a possible opportunity to be in the ANC electoral lists and cabinets, thus creating conditions for political opportunism within the SACP, COSATU, and SANCO at all levels of these organizations.

47. Both these objective and subjective factors led to discontent largely between the ANC and its Alliance partners, leading to mass protests and strikes and ideological debates on economic policies, including the content and direction of the NDR. But it also led to opportunistic attacks on the ANC at different levels for narrow political objectives.

48. Against the backdrop of these profound changes in our role in post-apartheid society, we need again to pose the question whether we have adequately reformulated the strategic and structural basis of the Alliance. Further, are the organisational mechanisms we currently have adequate; and if not, is this due to a change in the political environment, emergent divergent strategic outlooks or sheer ineffectiveness of these organisational mechanisms? Whatever the case may be, the current reality of democratic state power, which is a critical (if not primary) terrain to advance the goals of the NDR, poses new challenges and contradictions. But our Alliance has remained largely informal, resting on general assumptions about the trajectory of the NDR. The questions we should now pose are:

- a. In the context of the challenges and demands of state power, not least the challenge of building the democratic hegemony of the national democratic state throughout society, is it time to consider a more detailed set of protocols around which the relationship with the Alliance partners can be constructed anew?
- b. Have we tended to rest on the comforting laurels of our historic camaraderie and avoided the difficult structural questions posed by the new situation?
- c. Have we assumed (wrongly) that strategic convergence on long term objectives would be sufficient to manage the complexities of democratic governance?
- d. Has our common dedication to the cause of the Freedom Charter blinded us to the gradual erosion of that common strategic vision, which may have now transformed into a fundamental rupture?

IS THERE A COMMON STRATEGIC VISION WITHIN THE ALLIANCE?

49. Due to some of the above objective and subjective reasons, in the early 2000s there emerged concerns within the Alliance that there has been a shift in the understanding of the National Democratic Revolution. In 2007 COSATU central committee argued that the *“historic consensus on the need for a radical NDR ... no longer obtains in 2007, and while the ‘radical view of the NDR’ remains the view of a large (and arguably the overwhelming majority of) sections of our movement, there are also significant elements within our movement, both on the left and the right, who now question the historic concept of the NDR.”*⁶

⁶ “The NDR and Socialism, the NDR and Capitalism: Key Strategic Debates”: COSATU Discussion Document for the 4th COSATU Central Committee, 17-20 September 2007, paragraph 8



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50. The same document goes onto argue that a number of subjective weaknesses could result in the implosion of the NDR:

*'This combination of defeatism, cynicism, and abandonment of the possibility of a radical national agenda is not merely a theoretical possibility in the South Africa of 2007. The debates at the recent SACP Congress show that there is a growing disillusionment with the possibility of asserting a radical NDR, even if this is still a minority viewpoint. If this momentum grows, there is the real possibility of the implosion of the NDR as the national unifying strategic vision, and growing isolation of the working class from broader society...'*⁷

51. In 2002, we agreed at Ekurhuleni that the strategic foundation of our alliance remains valid and intact:

*'The primary task of this epoch is the creation of a national democratic society. All the classes and strata which share this objective, as well as the schools of thought found in the democratic movement, see this as their current strategic objective. There is one NDR, at the core of which the liberation of black people in general and Africans in particular. Among these classes and strata, the working class is the leading motive force.'*⁸

52. The ANC's elaboration of the Character of the National Democratic Revolution (a National Democratic Society) has largely been retained since the 52nd National Conference in 2007, and it finds reiteration in the Strategy and Tactics document adopted at the 54th National Conference, but with different policies approaches to the economy. The National Democratic Society, the ANC argues:

'...should strive to realise shared prosperity, social justice and human solidarity, premised on:

- *a united state based on the will of all the people, without regard to race, sex, belief, language, ethnicity or geographic location;*
- *a dignified and improving quality of life among all the people by providing equal rights and opportunities to all citizens; and*
- *the restoration of the birth-right of all South Africans regarding access to land and other resources.*

'The NDR seeks to build a society based on the best in human civilisation in terms of political and human freedoms, socio-economic rights, value systems and identity. Such human civilisation should be reflected, firstly, in the constant improvement of the means to take advantage of our natural environment, turn it to collective human advantage, and ensure its regeneration for future use. Secondly, it should find expression in the management of human relations based on political equality and social inclusivity. If

⁷ Ibid, paragraph 81

⁸ Ekurhuleni Declaration of the Alliance – 7 April 2002



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there were to be any single measure of the civilising mission of the NDR, it would be how it treats the most vulnerable in society.'

53. In providing more content to this characterisation, the ANC asserts in the Strategy and Tactics document that it:

'... seeks to build democracy with social content, underpinned by a capable developmental state. Informed by our own concrete conditions and experiences, this will, in some respects, reflect elements of the best traditions of social democracy, which include: a system which places the needs of the poor and social issues such as health care, education and a social safety net at the top of the national agenda; intense role of the state in economic life; pursuit of full employment; quest for equality; strong partnership with the trade union movement; and promotion of international solidarity'.

54. These assertions of the ANC describe its ultimate objective as revolutionary liberation movement as 'a disciplined force of the left'. As indicated above, both the SACP and COSATU are pursuing a Socialist Revolution which, ultimately, should result in the creation of a communist society. Based on their analysis of colonial and apartheid social relations of the previous epoch, both, however, view the National Democratic Revolution as a necessary undertaking. The agreement of the 2002 Ekurhuleni Alliance Summit cited above affirms this approach, and it forms the strategic underpinning to the Tripartite Alliance. The fundamental question that needs to be addressed is whether this strategic perspective still holds and whether, if there are differences, these pertain to how this strategic objective is being pursued (tactics) and/or how these tasks are formulated and monitored (organisational structures).

55. The agreement on a unifying vision, and a common sense of purpose within the alliance, is not sufficient. In this period of our revolution, modes of operation and organisational practices associated with the operation of the alliance in earlier times may not be sufficient to confront the real challenges we face today.

56. The experiences during the of struggle against apartheid as the common enemy may contain many useful lessons and enduring examples of how to conduct alliance relationships. But the conditions we face today have all changed significantly since 1994. Our main task has shifted from opposing apartheid colonialism to leading development, from resistance to reconstruction. We now pursue the struggle around five very different pillars: the state, the economy, organisational work, ideological struggle, and international work.

57. The ANC may have many strong objections to the principles and modalities of alliance reconfiguration proposed by our alliance partners. Nevertheless, despite the perceived weakness of the SACP and COSATU proposals, the current conjuncture may present us with a golden opportunity to engage pro-actively with the questions posed above. This would involve responding in a mature fashion to the proposals emanating from the SACP and COSATU as a basis of moving towards a redefined Alliance. It could be that a stronger and more detailed agreement which clearly sets out the parameters, responsibilities and duties of each alliance partner would be an important step in advancing towards a national democratic society as the basis for the strategic and electoral pacts and accords called for by COSATU.



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INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF PACTS AND SOCIAL ACCORDS

58. At this point it would be useful to consider some of the international experiences of left parties and their relationships with trade union movements, especially as far as ‘pacts’ and ‘social accords’ are concerned⁹. This section provides a cursory and initial consideration of a limited number of such experiences. The experiences are only for possible lessons to be learnt and insights they could offer – not for mechanical copying.

Sweden

59. From the 1930s, the Swedish social democratic party (SAP) was able to build a broad social democratic hegemony by way of a working national consensus brokered by government between the trade unions, farmers, and capital. At the heart of this ‘social accord’ was a progressive political bloc rooted in SAP’s formal relationships with the largest trade union federation, the LO, which involved collective union membership in the SAP, significant union financial contributions and the incorporation of the LO president into the 7-member executive committee of the SAP. On this basis, the SAP was able to embed the social accord within the structure of the state through the establishment of corporatist institutions in which labour, business and government are represented to discuss wages, industrial relations and development strategies.

60. Sweden is notable as a successful example of a progressive political bloc building a successful national programme through corporatist institutions in the state, albeit under serious global competitive pressures threatening the sustenance of the social democratic gains. However, it is worth noting that Sweden differs from South Africa (and most other capitalist countries) in a number of important respects including the depth and organisational maturity of the trade union movement which at its height had organised 85% of the labour force into its ranks. Capital has also been highly concentrated, predominantly national (as opposed to multi-national) and exhibits a high degree of corporate unity, in the form of strong and coherent national organisations of employers.

The United Kingdom

61. The history of the social accords in Britain is – in contrast to Sweden – useful primarily as an example of turbulence. In an environment of extreme macro-economic challenges during the 1970s, Labour governments attempted to combat inflation by entering into a social contract with the trade unions, which introduced wage restraint and limited pay rises. This policy was initially fairly successful in controlling inflation, which had been reduced to below 10% by 1978. However, the British Social Contract divided the labour movement and the agreement collapsed in a strike wave known as the ‘winter of discontent’ in 1979. This brought an end to Labour Party government and paved the way for the election of Thatcher’s Conservative government in the same year. It was more than fifteen years before Labour returned to office.

62. In 2004, perhaps building on the lessons of this painful past, the Labour Party and its affiliate unions agreed to a new type of accord, negotiated outside the structures of government. The Warwick Accord

⁹ In principle a ‘social accord’ is not the same thing as an ‘alliance pact’, although the two are inter-related. We return to this point below but for the purposes of illustrating some of the international experience we consider examples of both in this section.



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formed the basis for some of the Labour Party's manifesto commitments in the 2005 elections. The Warwick Agreement was essentially a statement of principles that would guide the Labour Party in government. However, it did contain specific policy commitments on questions such as the conditions of public sector workers, labour law, skills development and support for the manufacturing sector.

Australia

63. While the Australian Labour Party was in government between 1983 and 1996 it signed an agreement with the labour federation, ACTU, called the Prices and Income Accord. The accord somewhat resembled the British Social Contract, in that it was essentially a prices and incomes policy in which the ACTU accepted central wage determination, in exchange for which the government committed to bring down unemployment through a variety of fiscal and labour market measures whilst curbing and reducing inflation. Furthermore, the accord stipulated a range of legal rights for workers, in areas such as health and safety, redundancy and retraining, and it also promised redistributed tax changes, price controls, increases in social security and an enhanced role for organised labour in macro-economic policy making through new planning institutions.

64. There has been raging debate in left circles in Australia about the effectiveness of the Accord and its usefulness for trade unions. It has been argued the accord could not alter the strategic prerogatives of large capital and at the same time imposed significant costs on workers, including real wage cuts for public sector workers and limited wage increases for others.

Ireland

65. The first Irish social pact was signed in 1987 as a mechanism to deal with the economic crisis of the 1980s. According to that pact (called the Programme for National Recovery - PNR), the government, business, labour and other social partners agreed to some principles and programmes on matters such as wages, growing the economy, social insurance and industrial relations. Successive social pacts between social partners have been entered into dealing with emerging challenges facing the Irish economy and society. These pacts are concrete attempts by all social partners to devise mechanisms to deal with challenges facing Irish society as a whole.

Brazil

66. Whilst no formal pact or social accord exists in Brazil it is worth noting since because the trade union movement was instrumental in the formation of Brazil's Workers Party (PT) and retains strong links with the party. Other important groups also participated in its formation and constituted its activist base, the most important being Landless Peoples Movement, the Catholic Church and groupings drawn from the middle class. This diversity of the PT's support base partly explains the reason why it decided not to privilege any particular grouping with special formal relationships. It also provided PT with the reason to claim that it was a pluralist organisation that was driven by the views of the people.

67. Prior to his election as President of Brazil Lula made promises not to change the economic policy path started by his predecessor Fernando Cardoso. When he got elected he pursued strict economic policy programme to stabilise an increasingly volatile economic situation. This was met with outrage from some within his political party some of whom have resigned from the party.



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68. The CUT, which is the largest confederation of trade unions in Brazil and is aligned to PT, urged its members to support Lula in his re-election campaign. While some in the trade union movement have been disappointed by Lula's government, there is no formal pact that has been signed between the PT and its labour allies. Those in the trade union movement who are disillusioned have formed their splinter group and left the confederation. Those who have remained by and large support the PT government led by Lula. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the post-Lula period including the current possibility of the electoral victory of a far right racist, homophobic and sexist agenda with a nostalgia for military dictatorship. The key lesson here is how the disintegration of the progressive forces set conditions for the rise of populism of various kinds, including the right-wing ones.

Mexico

69. In 1936 the then President of Mexico, Lázaro Cárdenas, instigated the formation of the Mexican Workers Confederation, popularly known by its Spanish acronym CTM, partly to bolster his political power in the context of power struggles within PRI and also for electoral purposes.

70. The relationship that developed between the party, PRI and the trade union movement, CTM became so close and beneficial to both organisations that their separate identities became difficult to distinguish. PRI, partly because of its support by CTM, governed Mexico for 71 years.

71. Members of CTM constituent unions and those of peasant organisations affiliated to PRI were automatically fee-paying members of PRI. These PRI supporting organisations also secured representation in the Central Executive Committee of the party; for instance, the Secretary General of PRI sits in the CEC of PRI. The leadership of PRI also featured prominently in candidate slates for political office of the PRI.

72. The close relationship between PRI and CTM however began to unravel in the early 1980s. The austerity policies introduced by the PRI government in response to the Mexican economic crisis meant that generous wage and social benefits that workers had enjoyed as a result of CTM and PRI relationship had to be reduced. Facing the economic crisis the government convened leaders of labour, business and peasants to sign a social pact called the Pact for Economic Solidarity (PSE).

73. The PSE was just the first in a series of social pacts that followed when Salinas, the Mexican President from PRI, assumed office in the late 1980s. For instance, in December 1988 President Salinas signed a social pact with labour, business and peasant representatives by which he sought consensus on his government's policies for the duration of his stay in office. The pacts covered a wide spectrum of areas including public sector salaries, income policies, tax credits, deregulation, etc. In 1992 Salinas signed the National Agreement for the Promotion of Quality and Productivity (ANECP), which was about encouraging productivity and the international competitiveness of the Mexican economy.

74. Other experiences in the context of anti-colonial and imperialist struggles, which are outside the traditional social 'compacts' and 'accords' show that the outcomes of the alliance between national revolutionary democrats, socialists and communists vary. In 1961 the three major revolutionary groups, namely, the 26 July Movement, the Revolutionary Directorate and the Communist Party merged into a United Party of the Socialist Revolution, which later became the Communist Party of Cuba in 1965. In China there was a split between nationalist Kuomintang and the Communist Party after the defeat of Japanese imperialism.



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75. In Africa, Frelimo in Mozambique and MPLA in Angola turned themselves into Marxist-Leninist parties and sought to build socialism in their respective countries. In his address to the 1977 MPLA Congress, OR Tambo stated that the defeat of Portuguese colonialism in Angola was *'...also a victory of all the peoples, including South Africa, who pledged to fight for the creation of a new socio-economic system which will be characterised by the abolition of exploitation of man by man through ownership of productive wealth by the people themselves, characterised as well by the self-government of the ordinary working people through institution of popular power....'*

76. In Africa, trade unions aligned to national liberation movements splintered and formed their own unsuccessful political parties in the post-political independence periods. For instance, the Zambian Congress of Trade Unions, and the Zimbabwean Congress of Trade Unions mounted electoral challenge against their respective post-colonial states. What lessons can we draw from these varied experiences in the current phase of our revolution?

Conclusions on international experiences

77. Reflecting on these international experiences of social accords, the following threads can be drawn out:

- a. Except for Brazil, most left parties have had formal relationships with the trade union movement. This has included such elements as: affiliation by the trade unions, rights and duties attached to such affiliation including subscriptions and representation in various leadership and other structures, and agreement on policies to be pursued in government. However, in all instances, the allies have avoided detailed co-determination in operational matters of government. Further, even in instances where such co-operation has been successful, it has been riven by some level of tension.
- b. Pacts or accords among left allies have often been instruments to deal with particular economic problems and crises, and/or to pursue particular national visions. These have encompassed rights and obligations of each partner and have included detailed issues on income policy, inflation and so on.
- c. National social accords have also been used to deal with national difficulties or to pursue particular national objectives. As in Ireland, such accords, which include business and other sectors have been critical to the reconstruction of such societies.

78. Further discussion is required on the applicability and desirability of these examples in the South Africa context. It is notable that in Brazil there is no actual social accord or pact between the party and the union movement. And in another developing country, Mexico, the left pact had to be broadened to include other social partners. Of course, the question does arise as to whether such a social accord can be maintained in conditions of 21st century capitalism – conditions associated with the term 'globalisation'.

79. The class compromise/social accords were enabled by the higher economic growth, which enabled capital to make concessions as a response to militant working class mobilization and organization. The rate of economic growth and business profitability made it possible to finance social welfare



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states and support active labour policies. In the current context of low economic growth, it may be more difficult for capital to make concessions. Instead, more concessions may be expected from labour.

80. Furthermore, drawing from the experiences of the alliances between national liberation, trade union movements and communist movements, there are no linear and predetermined outcomes on how national liberation would finally be concluded, consolidated and advanced. In certain instances, the relationship between the national liberation movements and communist movements ended bitterly. In certain cases, the relationship ended in merging of the two into one movement. The end of the relationship between trade union movement and governing parties in post-colonial Africa have not so far produced any revolutionary outcomes in favour of the progressive forces.

CAPITAL AND LABOUR IN A POST-APARTHEID, GLOBALLY INTEGRATED SOUTH AFRICA

81. In an earlier section of this document ('Re-imagining the Alliance under Terrains of Struggle') we posed the question of whether we have adequately considered the implications of the new political terrain for the form of the alliance. Here we consider some of the social and economic transformation associated with the process of social transformation undertaken in our country since 1994 and changes in the global social terrain.

82. South Africa is today 'another country' compared to where we were in 1994. The major changes, with a direct bearing on the strategic and tactical approaches of the Alliance include:

- a. Improvement in the conditions of life of the overwhelming majority of South Africans, reflected in access to basic services such as water, electricity, education, health and refuse removal.
- b. Part of the success of the process of social transformation has been the emergence of a large 'middle class' from the Black community, which now constitutes the absolute majority, though its position remains tenuous as it lacks historical assets.
- c. A sizeable Black capitalist group has emerged and continues to grow, ranging from small to large businesses and shareholders in established companies.
- d. Largely, though, the progress cited above is underpinned by growing numbers of unemployed people, mass youth marginalisation, persistent patriarchy, misogyny and gender-based violence
- e. Accession to positions of leadership within the state means that a large cohort of the leadership of the Alliance now occupy the middle and upper ranges of the social ladder, creating social distance with the majority of the motive forces.
- f. The 'sins of incumbency' or stagnation in our revolution also afflict the trade union movement – from shop-floor to national level – and, combined with 'business unionism' also associated with union investment companies, this has created novel challenges for the trade union movement.

83. At the same time, globalisation has had a fundamental impact on the nature of class power:

- a. The dynamic of capital mobility calls into question the meaning of a national bourgeoisie and accordingly makes national accumulation processes more volatile.



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- b. The shift towards service and knowledge-intensive sectors has expanded the size and influence of the middle strata throughout the world.
- c. The size and significance of the global working class is now vastly greater. However, this has not necessarily increased the socio-political impact of the working class with intra-working class competition, differing incomes and living conditions, weakened global solidarity.
- d. Advancements in the utilisation of technology in production processes, more intensely reflected in the impending 'Fourth Industrial Revolution', as well as the so-called gig economy not only threatens jobs, but also the effectiveness of old forms of worker organisation.
- e. Lately, the Left movement across the globe has been facing massive difficulties, with extreme right-wing jingoists, protectionists and nationalists corralling even working class constituencies behind their agendas.

84. One of the significant political dynamics in South Africa in the current period is the emergence of a professed Left political force with significant support in the electoral terrain. While combined ill-discipline leftism and narrow nationalism have always manifested themselves – perhaps quite naturally – within South African political dynamics, these have not had any traction among the electorate. The current conjuncture therefore contains the danger of an ahistorical, jingoistic, simplistic, self-centred and pretentiously-left force capturing the imagination of especially of the youth.

85. Against this backdrop the Alliance becomes even more relevant and important. The Alliance is central to the political mobilising strategy we must craft in the context of the domestic and global conjuncture. It is the basis of a multi-class political force capable of designing and effecting a strong state that can buttress the impact of imperialism and harness the positives in globalisation and technological change to the benefit of our society, especially the poor. It is the force that can chart a truly revolutionary programme that is based on the aspirations of the people, and one that proceeds from a mature and realistic reading of the domestic and global balance of forces. Such a movement should be able to win over the majority of social partners across the class divide, to pursue the goals of the national democratic revolution.

RE-IMAGINING THE ALLIANCE AND ITS AGENDA

86. As noted above, the Ekurhuleni II and the 2008 Alliance Summit declarations identified a strategic convergence between alliance partners, not only in terms of the broad strategic goals of the NDR, but also on matters of short to medium term programmes centered around the radical socio-economic transformation. Since the 54th ANC National Congress, there seem to be more and significant degree of convergence on a wide range of political, economic and social policy issues within the Alliance. The 54th ANC National conference and the 2017 SACP conference, for example, passed substantially similar resolutions on the challenges of radical socio-economic transformation. So, there is space between broad consensus on the direction of policy and the detailed programme of implementation. Of course, there exists considerable room for differences and contestation as is the case with the economic section of the National Development Plan.



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87. The question needs to be posed again: In the current period, the critical question is whether the notion of the NDR, as articulated in the 54th ANC's Strategy and Tactics document – and various interpretations of this concept by the allies – represents a broad common platform that should serve as a basis for strategic unity. This issue needs to be interrogated taking into account the fact that the SACP and COSATU are pursuing a Socialist Revolution.

88. What follows in the next section of this document are the major questions and agenda items that would need to be engaged as we redefine the Alliance.

Electoral Mandates, Policy Development and Deployment

89. The first issue that a redefinition of the Alliance would need to consider is the relationship of the Alliance to state power. The challenge of governance concerns how the ANC relates to its alliance partners in the process of providing strategic political leadership to government.

90. Current practice has in fact allowed the alliance partners significant opportunities to contribute towards and influence both the formulation of ANC election manifestos and the compilation of lists. In all the manifesto processes since 1994 the alliance partners have been central participants, e. Similarly, COSATU and the SACP currently play a central role in the preparation of election lists and had taken part in the ANC Deployment Committees, albeit not fully satisfied in certain instances, and at different levels of the state and Alliance. Clearly, any proposal that seeks to substitute the 'alliance political centre' for the ANC as the main vehicle for electoral contestation should be seriously questioned, since it redefines the organizational leadership of the ANC. Proposals that "policy formulation, deployments and quotas for representation of the different alliance partners at every level, with independent caucuses and the power of recall to ensure accountability" are on the face of it equally impractical.

91. Nevertheless, this still leaves considerable room for discussion about a clearer definition of the role of each of alliance partner in the process of defining, seeking and monitoring the implementation of electoral mandates, as well as managing the deployment of public representatives. To a large extent, a more productive dialogue between the government and the Alliance depends on a clearer definition of the ANC's own procedures and practices. In this regard, the current ANC proposals on organisational renewal should in themselves be central to the redefinition of the Alliance. The ANC's election manifesto has no constitutional status and the processes of drafting manifestos have been somewhat ad hoc. The proposal that the manifesto be adopted at a National Policy Conference could form the basis for further development of a manifesto drafting and adoption process which might lay the basis for addressing some of the concerns raised by our alliance partners in their proposals for a "pact".

92. An election manifesto is only the first step, at the most general level, for generating a programme of government over the term of office. A vast array of issues must be navigated as the election manifesto is translated into white papers, legislation, regulations, programmes and projects, as these influence the allocation of resources through the budget process and these resources are utilised in the process of realising the election mandate.

93. This poses the question of monitoring the implementation of the electoral mandate. Once again the key solution to the problems of the Alliance may lie in the strengthening and refining of the ANC's own capacities. In particular the creation of ANC capacity to monitor and evaluate government performance



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would create considerable scope for ongoing interaction with the Alliance partners on the basis of which a common analysis of strengths, weaknesses, problems and solutions could be forged. Two important aspects of this, are strengthening and capacitating the ANC Policy Institute and capacity building of the NEC policy committees. Furthermore, the National Congress proposals for the second Deputy Secretary-General responsible for monitoring and implementation of the ANC resolutions should be seriously considered.

94. As noted above, in every election since 1994 COSATU and the SACP have in practice secured ample 'representation' on the ANC's electoral lists. In this light, the proposal that there be quotas on these lists seems odd, since the ANC has only been too willing to accept the large numbers of SACP and COSATU cadres onto its election lists. In fact, any 'quota' agreement is likely to reduce rather than expand their 'representation'. Related to this are two issues that cannot be ignored:

- a. Except for local government where there are part-time Councillors, inclusion of COSATU cadres in ANC lists is assumed to be from the perspective that these cadres are transiting from the trade union movement into fulltime politics. In doing so, they assume the status of representatives of a political party which COSATU is not.
- b. The acceptance of dual membership between the SACP and the ANC means that SACP cadres are in fact allowed a 'double bite at the cherry'. A formal quota system would occasion hair-splitting that could degenerate into the kind of witch-hunting that would be disastrous for the Alliance and the NDR
- c. It is hard to imagine how the proposal of 'independent caucuses and right of recall' could be practically realised, without a fundamental redefinition of the Alliance.
- d. Furthermore, quota just like allowing SACP members presenting the SACP political-line in the legislatures, would generate doubts about loyalty to the ANC mandates and policy perspectives. This proposal on quotas and independence whilst still contesting the elections under the ANC would be tantamount to entryism and seeking deployment and independence within legislature without loyalty to the ANC and its policies.

95. Beyond the level of public representatives, deployment into executive structures in government needs to be treated with great caution. As indicated above, even among the left parties with formal relationships with the union movement which includes affiliation, subscriptions and conference quotas, there is an acceptance of the convention that deployment into the executive has to be left to the leader or leadership collective of the party in government. In our case, even within the ANC, consultative mechanisms exist at the level of the officials (across the spheres) – and in some cases to the exclusion of those officials who may have a direct interest. The rationale for this seems quite obvious.

Clarifying the type, content and scope of an 'electoral pact'

96. It may be that improvements in the ANC's capacities may be insufficient to respond to the proposals of our alliance partners, and that some form of electoral pact is called for. If so, the first question to ask is the **type** of agreement we envisage.



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97. Whereas a social accord involves setting a common agenda by agreement between government, business and labour (and perhaps others), the idea of a redefined Alliance concerns the revitalisation of the progressive bloc in the form of the tripartite Alliance. Nevertheless, in practice a social accord has in most cases required the existence of a progressive bloc and the two concepts are inextricably inter-related. Even so, it is important that we clearly distinguish between three types of agreement

- a. Agreement between a labour or social democratic party and a trade union federation on a minimum programme to be implemented by the party on winning elections.
- b. An agreement between social partners, including business, labour and government, at a corporatist forum.
- c. An agreement between political parties on an election platform, and also agreeing to share power in the form of a coalition after the election.

98. It is not clear from current proposals which of the three is being contemplated and/or what the relationship between them would be. If we take the resolutions of COSATU and the SACP together, they appear to conflate all these forms of agreement.

99. We would also need to clarify the exact relationship between an 'alliance pact' and a 'social accord'. Since the latter would require negotiation with other social partners (such as capital) how flexible would the alliance pact be? If it were regarded as cast in stone this would undermine the possibility of a broader agreement, thus perhaps leading to the collapse of the 'pact'. If it were regarded as a starting position of the Alliance pending negotiation with other social partners this could open the space for shaping a social accord in formal institutions such as NEDLAC, as distinct from the ANC developing its manifesto both as a revolutionary movement pursuing thorough-going transformation and as a leader of society pursuing a social pact or people's contract. In turn, an alliance pact to the exclusion of all other social partners as distinct from a broad framework of strategic objectives, could lead to the perception, when a broader accord is developed, that an Alliance directive has been watered down or defied.

100. A second set of questions concerns the **content** of the proposed pact, the answer to which is clearly bound together with the discussion of the type of agreement. At the conclusion of the debate within COSATU about a possible pact arrangement prior to the 1994, the idea of a reconstruction and development pact was rejected in favour of a reconstruction and development programme. If a similar arrangement were entered into prior to 2019 general elections, what level of detail should it entail? The Warwick Agreement in the UK is an example of a set of broad principles, combined with detailed agreements on a limited number of specific areas of concern to trade union members in general and public sector workers in particular.

101. There may be valid arguments for a detailed review and reformulation of a national development strategy along the lines of the RDP. The RDP remains at the core of our programmes, but it will soon be 26 years since it was formulated. Notwithstanding the contested economic chapter of the NDP, should the NDP be basis of our policy programme? A third set of issues relate to the **scope** of the electoral pact and the responsibilities and duties of each of the 'signatories'. If a pact entails the consolidation of a progressive bloc as a basis for the consolidation of a social accord, then we would need to consider specifying more clearly the role that each organisation would play. In the speech we cited earlier, O.R. also said:



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'Within our revolutionary alliance each organisation has a distinct and vital role to play. A correct understanding of these roles, and respect for their boundaries has ensured the survival and consolidation of our cooperation and unity'.

102. How should we interpret this formulation in the light of the conditions we currently face, and the calls for an electoral pact? The 'pact' proposed by COSATU appears to involve the ANC being held to a pre-defined policy package. Clearly, through its control of the state, the ANC could potentially offer a wide range 'concessions' in the course of bargaining over the proposed 'pact'. If this is the basis on which our allies wish to proceed we would then need to ask what they would 'bring to the table'. The examination of international experience offered above may provide some pointers in this regard. The nature of compromises that the SACP could offer is less clear.

103. Related to the duties and obligations of the participants in the proposed 'alliance pact' is the question of which organisations or groupings should participate. Should the pact be primarily between the ANC and COSATU? What would be the role of the SACP? Should SANCO be involved? Should a broader agreement also be reached with social movements, churches and other formations such as the Black Management Forum – that is, structures which represent what are defined as motive forces of the NDR?

Strengthening the Trade Union Movement

104. Another element of a redefined Alliance is how the ANC, the SACP and COSATU should work together further to strengthen COSATU and the broader trade union movement. Whilst COSATU has retained its level of membership, there has been a significant shift of union membership from the private to the public sector. This reflects the extent of unemployment, the growth of non-traditional sectors of the economy, including services and the informal sector, as well as the strategies of capital to outsource, informalise and sub-contract employment as earlier mentioned. At the same time COSATU membership relative to the labour force as a whole has declined significantly.

105. The erosion COSATU's industrial base has been worsened by the expulsion of NUMSA, and followed by FAWU which left the federation in solidarity with NUMSA, thus leaving out almost 400 000 industrial workers outside COSATU. Related to the trade union movement and the role of the SACP, we should ask the extent to which the SACP as the vanguard has been playing its role in building the working class consciousness and unity in action the context of the national democratic revolution and socialism. What are the lessons we can draw from the expulsion of NUMSA from COSATU?

106. The Alliance needs frankly to reflect on the question whether the ANC (as a broad liberation movement and the SACP (as a vanguard of the working class) can simply walk away from unions that are broadly progressive but are located outside of COSATU. Similarly, the decisions that COSATU has taken about, firstly, pursuing unity with these progressive forces and, secondly, moving towards the principle of *One Country, One Federation* are not only correct; but need to be pursued with serious determination by all components of the Alliance.

107. Strengthening the trade union movement also entails seriously addressing the 'sins of incumbency' as they affect organised workers. These range from co-option of shop-stewards into privileged positions within the workplace, to temptations that attach to 'business unionism' and the



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possibility of using the progressive trade union movement as a stepping stone to political office within government and corporate sector.

108. 21 years ago COSATU's September Commission pointed to the dangers this posed to the union movement:

'Increasing labour market flexibility is one of the key characteristics of globalisation world-wide. This generates increasing differentiation and fragmentation within the organised working class as different workers perceive themselves as having different interests. Some workers gain access to new skills and career paths with good pay, conditions and benefits; others become 'outsiders' with various kinds of non-standard contracts which undermine job security, conditions and benefits.

In some countries, these trends have left the unions based in a shrinking sector of the working class: above them is a layer of skills and 'professional' workers who see no need to join a union, and below them is a large mass of temporary, part time, sub contracted, outsourced workers who are vulnerable and difficult to organise. Similar trends are beginning to emerge in South Africa...'¹⁰

109. In addressing these challenges, we have to accept that we live in a very different social and economic time. The challenge is not to hold change and return to an imagined past, but to successfully adjust to a new world in which the nature of work, the range of work and the location of the workplace have changed very substantially. Of particular significance is that major structural divisions in the labour market have emerged. Such changes cannot merely be dealt with by trying to regulate against them and hold all workers within the well understood ambit of existing labour market legislation. A more comprehensive response is needed.

110. Whilst COSATU affiliates have responded with success to developments in some sectors (e.g. casualised workers in retail) in general the trends identified in the September Commission have continued to weaken the basis of the progressive trade union movement, and thus the programme of national democratic transformation.

111. Particularly noteworthy is the absence of significant inroads into vulnerable sectors such as farm and domestic workers, as well as casualised workers. The failure to organise these vulnerable workers has had various negative consequences. Despite the enactment of progressive legislation protecting the security of tenure of farm-workers evictions, abuse, super-exploitation and human rights violations continue unabated. Some argue that they have intensified. The absence of an organised voice for domestic workers has limited the potential of progressive interventions around minimum wages and conditions of service by the democratic state, and posed an excessive burden on institutions such as the CCMA.

112. The ANC's support is consistently stronger amongst the less organised workers, the unemployed and the vulnerable. Therefore the role the ANC, COSATU and the SACP, working together – and through the democratic state – in creating new and dynamic institutions able to mobilise and organise vulnerable and excluded workers is a potentially powerful vehicle for advancing the economic and social transformation of South African society.

¹⁰ COSATU 6th National Congress, 16-19 September 1997, Book 3, Report from the September Commission



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113. More broadly we would need to consider ways of strengthening the role of the trade union movement in a wide array of institutional settings relating to the regulation of labour markets and building corporatist institutions such as SETA's and Pension Funds.

Public Servants and building a Developmental State

114. One of the most significant gains for workers in the democratic era has been the emergence of strong public sector unions, and the creation of a favourable environment for almost 100% union density amongst public sector workers. At the same time the task of transforming the state and creating a truly effective developmental public service able to provide the kind of services our people are demanding is a critical aspect of national democratic transformation. Given that state power also positions the ANC as an employer of millions of workers, how do we manage the tensions that this relationship is bound to occasion and, inversely, how should workers located in state institutions pursue their sectoral interests at the same time as they fulfil the broader task of social transformation?

115. Obviously, the ANC-in-government cannot shirk its responsibility as 'employer' and COSATU is the most significant representative of public service 'employees'. This (perhaps inevitably) has been one of the root causes of significant tensions in alliance relationships over the last twenty-four years.

116. Therefore, the public service is both a significant challenge and a significant opportunity for developing an understanding of the strategic and programmatic relationships that can be forged between a ruling party and a progressive trade union movement. The exact modalities and basis of this relationship in respect of public sector workers requires much more discussion and thought.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

117. In this document we have attempted to provide a basis for discussion within the ANC on the proposals emanating from our alliance partners for a reconfiguration of the Alliance, including through some form of election pact.

118. We have argued that at first sight, it would be easy to dismiss the COSATU and SACP congress positions as being completely at odds with our historic approach to the Alliance. The idea of an election pact appears to be a proposal to establish "a paper alliance created at conference tables and formalised through the signing of documents".

119. However, as leader of the Alliance, the ANC is duty-bound to engage with the underlying subjective concerns as well as the objective basis of these resolutions. Rather than a knee-jerk rejection, the ANC should seek to build a comprehensive response which builds the unity of the Alliance and advances the goals of a better life for all. In doing so, we would need to ask if a common strategic vision constitutes an adequate basis (on its own) for the challenges posed to the Alliance by the tasks of the current phase of the NDR.



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120. Despite the weakness of some proposals entailed in the SACP and COSATU documents, the current conjuncture may present us with a golden opportunity to engage pro-actively with the questions posed above. This would involve engaging with the many positive elements in the proposals emanating from the SACP and COSATU – not least of which, for a start, is a comprehensive and cogent analysis of the current and evolving balance of forces, and the tasks of each component of the Alliance. It could be that a formal, stronger and more detailed definition of the parameters, responsibilities and duties of each alliance partner would be an important step in advancing towards a national democratic society.

Recommendations

121. The envisaged December 2018 Tripartite Alliance Summit should further discuss these proposals. The Summit should be preceded by Alliance Political Council which should tease out areas of agreements and disagreements; and set out a process to implement agreements; and process to resolve areas of disagreements.

122. In this regard, it is proposed that the ANC NEC adopts an approach in respect of matters canvassed above (while being open to proposals and arguments that will come from the Alliance partners) that is informed both by the current strategic tasks and the organisational measures required to reconfigure the Alliance:

Strategic issues

- a. The Alliance needs to reflect on the strategic articulation of the National Democratic Revolution and the kind of alternative society we aim for in the medium-term (National Democratic Society). These issues, which are captured in the 54th Conference ANC's Strategy and Tactics document, need to be confirmed as the basis of the strategic relationship, proceeding from the understanding that the SACP and COSATU pursue progression towards a classless society.
- b. The Alliance Summit must also discuss the tasks of the each Alliance partner in relation to the NDR and the motive forces. We need to discuss the role and the tasks of the ANC in relation to all the classes towards building a national democratic society; as entailed in the 54th ANC Strategy and Tactics; the role and tasks of the COSATU in relation to workers; the tasks of the SACP in relation to the working class as a whole in the context of the NDR and its struggle for socialism. And how will the reconfigured Alliance enhance the SACP's vanguard role in working class interests and struggles in the current phase our revolution?
- c. The Alliance needs to craft a programme (to be reflected in the election manifesto) which addresses speedier movement towards a National Democratic Society – informed by people's aspirations, logic and a rational reading of the domestic and global balance of forces.
- d. While the ANC's programmes do address issues pertaining to the creation of a more equitable society, it does have its limitations. COSATU and the SACP are better placed to articulate radical and yet rational critiques of the socio-economic system and to challenge the emergence of an ultra-leftism that poses a danger to the revolution.



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- e. The Alliance should develop a process through which its own positions on the transformation of South African society will lay a basis for a national partnership involving all sectors of society. It should lead in the development of a possible social compact for growth and development in line with the radical socio-economic transformation.
- f. Unity of the working class has always been a strategic task of the Alliance: this must be pursued with serious urgency.
- g. The role of the Alliance in places where the ANC is not in government should also be discussed. To illustrate, what should be the role of the Alliance in the local municipalities and metros such as Tshwane, Johannesburg and Nelson Mandela, governed by the opposition; and Metsimaholo municipality, which is governed by the SACP together other organizations with the ANC as the opposition?

Organisational issues

- h. As leader of the NDR, the ANC should remain the public expression of the electoral voice of the motive forces and their organisations, at the core of which is the Tripartite Alliance.
- i. The current approach, where public representatives are mandated to implement ANC policy and are subject to ANC discipline should be retained. While the candidates may interact on their work with any organisation to which they belong (SACP) or from which they originated (COSATU), there should be a single formal system of accountability to the ANC – in which Alliance representatives would have a say.
- j. There should be high-level participation of Alliance partners in the election structures of the ANC for the ideas of the partners organically to help inform decisions on these matters. These structures range from the Election Subcommittee and its substructures to the National Policy Conference which will decide on the Election Manifesto.
- k. Alliance partners should take active part in the policy and implementation review processes – including the [June/July] NEC Makgotlas – that will be undertaken in the build-up to the drafting of the Election Manifesto. The Alliance should be represented at a high level in the national and sub-national deployment committees.
- l. With regard to the list processes in particular, mechanisms to ensure active participation by the Alliance partners should be strengthened so as to help inform the ANC democratic processes to select candidates. The deployment committees and the officials should, as is standard practice, augment the outcome of this democratic process taking into account various criteria, including the interests of the Alliance partners. However, constitution of the cabinet must be left in the hands of the President. That is to say, the current practice on the appointment of cabinet must be maintained. Furthermore, no alliance leader or anyone in the ANC must be guaranteed or feel entitled to a leadership position either in the ANC and in the state. Deployment must be based on the task, capacity and relevance to the area of the required deployment.



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- m. All NEC Subcommittees should include representatives of the Alliance partners, both to contribute to strategic recommendations to ANC constitutional structures and to take part in the monitoring and evaluation of implementation. Among others, critical in this regard will be the Policy, Political Education, Economic Transformation and Social Transformation Subcommittees. Each of these subcommittees should, further, develop mechanisms for joint activities with corresponding structures of the Alliance partners.
- n. Re-affirm the resolutions of the both 2002 and 2008 Alliance Summits which stated that:
 - i. The Alliance secretariat should meet twice a month;
 - ii. The extended secretariat plus Presidency should meet monthly;
 - iii. The officials should meet every two months;
 - iv. The Ten-a-Side should meet twice yearly; and
 - v. There should be one Alliance Summit annually.

