

UMRABULO

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Introduction

The vision of the Freedom Charter for decades guided struggles against apartheid colonialism and forms the basis of our programme to transform South Africa into a non-racial, non-sexist, united democracy.

The main clauses of the Charter inspired and guided struggles at all levels and among all sectors - youth, students, the landless, workers, the homeless, unemployed, cultural workers and intellectuals. The consultative approach followed in the collection of the demands informed our people-driven and people-centred approach to change.

Forty-six years later, this vision of the Freedom Charter remains the common programme of the Tripartite Alliance. The Charter recognizes the symbiotic link between national oppression and South African capitalism. In its vision and programme for a national democracy, it therefore recognizes the centrality of the deracialisation of society, including the economy, land ownership, settlement patterns, the fundamental task of uplifting the conditions of the poor and providing opportunities for blacks and women in economic, social, educational, cultural and other spheres.

How we go about implementing this vision, is a matter which the Alliance is consistently seized with in our individual and joint programmes. The terrain in which we implement this vision has become much more complex. The Alliance since 1994 continues to grapple with the transformation challenges set out in the Freedom Charter: how do we ensure that people share in the country's wealth and the land or have houses security, work and comfort or how do we open the doors of learning and culture to all?

The Alliance will meet in one of its annual summits in August this year, and will review progress and discuss the concrete issues of speeding up change to meet the vision of the Charter. These issues include accelerating programmes against poverty, hunger and unemployment, health for all, meeting basic needs, redistribution and growth, developing human resources, safety and security and transforming the state as set out in the Reconstruction and Development Programme.

The discussion papers in this edition of Umrabulo are part of the preparations and debates towards this summit. Indeed, these are the issues that as a society we must pledge to ourselves to strive together, sparing neither strength nor courage, until the democratic changes set out in the Freedom Charter have been won.

How do members take charge?

The countrywide realignment of ANC branches, which started at the beginning of this year, will see another stage of revolutionizing the ANC. The objective is to reinforce and strengthen the branches of the ANC as the primary units of the movement, through which members determine policies and programmes of the ANC.

The more than 3000 new ward-based branches are being built to become vanguards for change of their communities, driving local community development, the integration of communities and quality local democracy and participation. The new ward-based branches will ensure accountability of councilors and information flow between councils and communities. They must become stronger vehicles for community and sectoral mobilization, mass communication and the involvement of ANC members in the process of transformation at all levels.

For this to be effected, it will require the rejuvenation of political and social activism among ANC and Alliance members, in the spirit of service to the people and developing New Cadres. It will require building an organisational culture that suits the new conditions, on the firm foundations of our traditions and values that have preserved the ANC for nearly ninety years. Among these is the approach to electing leadership, which is discussed in the paper 'Through the eye of a needle' - how do we elect the best cadres that will lead the process of transformation. These are among the tasks that will enable us to implement the vision of the Freedom Charter.



Revolutionary programme of the African National Congress

An analysis of the Freedom Charter as adopted at the National Consultative Conference, Morogoro, 1969

For over two hundred and fifty years the African people fought wars of resistance against the European invaders in defence of their motherland -South Africa. Despite their heroism, courage and tenacity our people were defeated on the battlefield by the superior arms and organisation of the Europeans.

Although the conflicts and problems of South Africa have largely centred on the relationships between the Africans and Europeans, they are not the only peoples who form the South African population. The Coloured and Indian people are, like the Africans, oppressed by the dominant European minority. The South Africa of today is the product of the common labour of all its peoples. The cities, industries, mines and agriculture of the country are the result of the efforts of all its peoples. But the wealth is utilised by and for the interests of the white minority only.

The African National Congress was formed in 1912 to unite the Africans as a nation and to forge an instrument for their liberation. From the outset the African National Congress asserted the right of the African people as the indigenous owners of the country, entitled to determine its direction and destiny. Simultaneously our forefathers recognised that the other groups in the country - the Europeans, Indians and Coloureds - were historically part and parcel of South Africa.

Democratic Principles

The ANC rejected the claims of the European settlers to domination, and fought against all attempts to subjugate them in the land of their birth. But in the face of the gravest injustices the ANC never once abandoned the principle that all those who had their home in the country of the Africans, were welcome, provided only that they accepted full and consistent equality and freedom for all. In this the ANC was not merely bowing to history and reality but believed that it was correct in principle to make this position clear. Over and over again in the face of manifest inhumanity the ANC absolutely refused to be provoked into abandoning its democratic principles. The ruling white minority rejected the concepts of the ANC and to that extent the movement and the people fought and will fight them.

Congress of the People

In the early fifties when the struggle for freedom was reaching new intensity the need was seen for a clear statement of the future South Africa as the ANC saw it. Thus was born the Congress of the People campaign. In this campaign the African National Congress and its allies invited the whole of South Africa to record their demands which would be incorporated in a common document called the Freedom Charter. Literally millions of people participated in the campaign and sent in their demands of the kind of South Africa they wished to live in. These demands found final expression in the Freedom Charter. The Freedom Charter was adopted at the Congress of the People representative of all the people of South Africa which met at Kliptown, Johannesburg on June 25 and 26, 1955. The three thousand delegates who gathered at Kliptown were workers, peasants, intellectuals, women, youth and students of all races and colours. The Congress was the climax of the campaign waged by the African National Congress, the South African Indian Congress, the Coloured People's Organisation, the South African Congress of Trade Unions and the Congress of Democrats. Subsequently all these organisations adopted the Freedom Charter in their national conferences as

their official programme. Thus the Freedom Charter became the common programme enshrining the hopes and aspirations of all the progressive people of South Africa.

"High Treason"

From the moment the idea of the Congress of the People and the Freedom Charter was mentioned the white Government of South Africa termed it "High Treason". After the Congress of the People was held and the Charter adopted, fresh threats were uttered by the government. Eventually 156 leaders of the liberation movement were arrested on December 5, 1956, and charged with plotting to overthrow the State and to replace it by a new one along the lines laid down in the Charter. This long trial, which lasted four-and-a-half years, resulted in the acquittal of all the accused. By that time the Freedom Charter had become one of the most famous documents in the history of man's struggle for freedom.

The Charter was not the statement of this or that section of the population. It was a declaration of all the people of South Africa. It was a simple, honest, unpretentious document reflecting the desires and ideas of millions of common people. Therein lay the power of its revolutionary message. And always it should be borne in mind that both in its wording and intent the Charter projected the view not of present-day South Africa but that of the country as it should and will be after the victory of the revolution. Today the African National Congress and its allies are engaged in an armed struggle for the overthrow of the racist regime. In its place the ANC will establish a democratic State along the lines indicated in the Freedom Charter. Although the Charter was adopted 14 years ago its words remain as fresh and relevant as ever. Some who have forgotten its actual terms or the kind of document it is, or, who detach this or that phrase from the document taken as a whole, imagine that the conditions of armed struggle somehow invalidate some provisions of the Charter. What we believe is that the Charter may require elaboration of its revolutionary message. But what is even more meaningful, it requires to be achieved and put into practice. This cannot be done until State power has been seized from the fascist South African government and transferred to the revolutionary forces led by the ANC.

The Preamble of the Freedom Charter

The first lines of the Charter declare that South Africa belongs to all 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.

The expression "South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white" embodies the historical principle which has characterised the policy of the African National Congress towards the peoples who have settled in the country in the past centuries. The African people as the indigenous owners of the country have accepted that all the people who have made South Africa and helped build it up, are components of its multinational population, are and will be in a democratic South Africa, one people inhabiting their common home. No government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will, not just of the whites, but of all the people of the country. The Freedom Charter thus begins by an assertion of what is and has been a cardinal democratic principle that all can live in South Africa whatever their origin, in equality and democracy. That the South Africa of the future will not be a country divided unto itself and dominated by a particular racial group. It will be the country of all its inhabitants. It is the white people who in the past as now have rejected this principle, leaving the people no alternative but to convince them by the truth of revolutionary struggle. The preamble ends by calling on the people, black and white, as equals, countrymen and brothers to pledge to strive together sparing neither strength nor courage until the democratic changes set out in the Freedom Charter had been won.

The preamble, couched in terms similar to many famous documents reflecting man's aspiration for freedom, called for a new State resting on the will of the people - a repudiation of the existing State and a call for revolution. Hereunder we examine, briefly, each section of our Charter.



The People Shall Govern!

The Republican constitution of South Africa passed in 1961 is a monument to racialism and despotism. In terms of this constitution supreme legislative authority is vested in the white fascist State President, the House of Assembly and the Senate. Only a white person can be elected State President.

The House of Assembly and the Senate consist exclusively of white representatives elected by an exclusively white electorate. Therefore the power to make laws in our country is a monopoly of the white minority. The same applies to other organs of government such as the four provincial councils of Natal, Cape, Orange Free State and Transvaal which are headed by a white Administrator assisted by an all-white Executive Council. Organs of local government such as District Councils, Municipal Councils, and boroughs are manned entirely by white people. Such organs of local government as there are for non-whites consist of the Transkei Legislative Council and an executive; the Indian Council; the Coloured Council; urban Bantu authorities, Territorial Authorities and other such bodies. These are all undemocratic institutions with little or no power and serving merely as a sounding board for the white minority government.

The administration in South Africa is similarly manned at all significant levels by white persons. A successful armed revolution will put an end to this state of affairs.

The Parliament of South Africa will be wholly transformed into an Assembly of the People. Every man and woman in our country shall have the right to vote for and stand as a candidate for all offices and bodies which make laws.

The present administration will be smashed and broken up. In its place will be created an administration in which all people irrespective of race, colour or sex can take part.

The bodies of minority rule shall be abolished and in their place will be established democratic organs of self-government in all the Provinces, districts and towns of the country.

All National Groups Shall Have Equal Rights!

In South Africa not only does the system at present enforce discrimination against individuals by reason of their colour or race but in addition some national groups are privileged, as such, over others. At the moment the Afrikaner national group is lording it over the rest of the population with the English group playing second-fiddle to them. For all the non-white groups - the Africans, Indians and the Coloureds the situation is one of humiliation and oppression. As far as languages are concerned only Afrikaans and English have official status in the bodies of State such as Parliament or Provincial Councils, and in the courts, schools and the administration. The culture of the African, Indian and Coloured people is barely tolerated. In fact everything is done to smash and obliterate the genuine cultural heritage of our people. If there is reference to culture by the oppressors it is for the purpose of using it as an instrument to maintain our people in backwardness and ignorance.

Day in and day out white politicians and publicists are regaling the world with their theories of national, colour and racial discrimination and contempt for our people. Enshrined in the laws of South Africa are a host of insulting provisions directed at the dignity and humanity of the oppressed people.

A democratic government of the people shall ensure that all national groups have equal rights, as such, to achieve their destiny in a united South Africa.

There shall be equal status in the bodies of State, in the courts and in the schools for the African, Indian, Coloured and whites as far as their national rights are concerned. 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 laws against insults to their race or national pride; the preaching and practice of national, racial or colour discrimination and contempt shall be a punishable crime; and all laws and practices based on apartheid or racial discrimination shall be set aside.



The People Shall Share in the Country's Wealth!

Today most of the wealth of South Africa is flowing into the coffers of a few in the country and others in foreign lands. In addition the white minority as a group have over the years enjoyed a complete monopoly of economic rights, privileges and opportunities.

An ANC government shall restore the wealth of our country, the heritage of all South Africans to the people as a whole. The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole.

At the moment there are vast monopolies whose existence affects the livelihood of large numbers of our people and whose ownership is in the hands of Europeans only. It is necessary for monopolies which vitally affect the social well-being of our people such as the mines, the sugar and wine industry to be transferred to public ownership so that they can be used to uplift the life of all the people. All other industry and trade which is not monopolistic shall be allowed with controls to assist the well-being of the people.

All restriction on the right of the people to trade, to manufacture and to enter all trades, crafts and professions shall be ended.

The Land Shall be Shared Among Those Who Work It!

The indigenous people of South Africa after a series of resistance wars lasting hundreds of years were deprived of their land. Today in our country all the land is controlled and used as a monopoly by the white minority. It is often said that 87 percent of the land is "owned" by the whites and 13 percent by the Africans. In fact the land occupied by Africans and referred to as "Reserves" is State land from which they can be removed at any time but which for the time being the fascist government allows them to live on. The Africans have always maintained their right to the country and the land as a traditional birthright of which they have been robbed. The ANC slogan "Mayibuye i-Afrika" was and is precisely a demand for the return of the land of Africa to its indigenous inhabitants. At the same time the liberation movement recognises that other oppressed people deprived of land live in South Africa. The white people who now monopolise the land have made South Africa their home and are historically part of the South African population and as such entitled to land. This made it perfectly correct to demand that the land be shared among those who work it. But who work the land? Who are the tillers?

The bulk of the land in our country is in the hands of land barons, absentee landlords, big companies and State capitalist enterprises. The land must be taken away from exclusively European control and from these groupings and divided among the small farmers, peasants and landless of all races who do not exploit the labour of others. Farmers will be prevented from holding land in excess of a given area, fixed in accordance with the concrete situation in each locality. Lands held in communal ownership shall be increased so that they can afford a decent livelihood to the people and their ownership shall be guaranteed. Land obtained from land barons and the monopolies shall be distributed to the landless and land-poor. State land shall be used for the benefit of all the people. Restrictions of land ownership on a racial basis shall be ended and all lands shall be open to ownership and use to all people, irrespective of race.

The State shall help farmers with implements, seeds tractors and dams to save soil and assist the tillers. Freedom of movement shall be guaranteed to all who work on the land. Instruments of control such as the 'Trek Pass', private gaols on farms and force labour shall be abolished. The policy of robbing people of their cattle in order to force them to seek work in order to pay taxes shall be stopped.

All shall be Equal before the Law!

In terms of such laws as the notorious Suppression of Communism Act; the Native Administrative Act; the Riotous Assemblies Act; the Terrorism and Sabotage Act and many other laws, our people suffer



imprisonment, deportation and restriction without fair trials. These laws shall be abolished. No one shall suffer imprisonment, deportation or restriction without fair trial.

In our country petty government officials are invested with vast powers at their discretion to condemn people. These powers shall be ended.

The courts of South Africa are manned by white officials, magistrates, judges. As a result the courts serve as instruments of oppression. The democratic state shall create courts representative of all the people. South Africa has the highest proportion of prisoners of any state in the world. This is because there are so many petty infringements to which a penalty of imprisonment is attached. In a new South Africa, imprisonment shall only be for serious crimes against the people, and shall aim at re-education, not vengeance.

It has been a standing policy of White governments in South Africa to prevent Africans and non-whites from holding responsible positions in the police force. The present police force and army are instruments of coercion to protect White supremacy. Their whole aim is punitive and terroristic against the majority of the population. It is the major aim of the armed revolution to destroy the police force, army and other instruments of coercion of the present state. In a democratic South Africa, the army and police shall be open to people of all races. Already Umkhonto we Sizwe - the nucleus of our future people's army - is an armed force working in the interests of the people drawn from the land for their liberation. It consists of people drawn from all population groups in South Africa.

All Shall Enjoy Equal Human Rights!

South Africa has numerous laws which limits or infringe the human rights of the people. One need only mention the notorious Suppression of Communism Act; proclamation 400 which imposes a state of emergency in the Transkei; Proclamation of 1953 which bans meetings of more than ten Africans in scheduled areas; the Native Laws Amendment Act which introduces racial discrimination in churches and places of worship; the Bantu Education Act which makes education without a government permit an offence - surely an offense unique in the world - to educate without a permit!

All the above Acts and regulations will be swept away by a people's government. The law shall guarantee to all their right to speak, organise, to meet together, to publish, to preach, to worship and to educate their children.

The Pass laws of South Africa result in the arrest of an average of 1000 persons a day. These laws control and prohibit movement of our people in the country. There are also laws which restrict movement from one province to another. As part of their checking of the people numerous police raids are organised during which homes are broken into at any time of the day or night. Many laws give the police powers to enter people's homes without warrant and for no apparent reason, except to terrorise them.

All this shall be abolished. The privacy of the home from police raids shall be protected by law. All shall be free to travel without restrictions from countryside to town, from province to province and from South Africa abroad. Pass laws, permits and other laws restricting these freedoms shall be abolished.

There shall be Work and Security!

As with everything else, the rights of collective bargaining of workers in South Africa have been twisted and warped by racial ideas and practices. Africans do not have the right to form registered trade unions and are prohibited from going on strike. Other workers are forced to belong to racially divided unions. The government has the power to determine what jobs shall be reserved for what racial groups. People of different races are paid differential wage rates for the same work. Migratory labour is a chief feature of the South African economy and leads to massive social upheaval and distress, particularly amongst Africans.



In the Democratic State the ANC is determined to achieve, 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 recognize 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, to form trade unions and join political organizations. The use of child labour, the housing of male workers in single men's compounds, the system whereby workers on wine farms are paid tons of wine as part payment on their wages, contract labour - all these pernicious practices shall be abolished by a victorious revolutionary government.

The Doors of Learning and Culture shall be Opened

One of the biggest crimes of the system of White supremacy is the damage it has done to the development of the people of South African in the fields of learning and culture. On the one hand, the minds of White people have been poisoned with all manner of unscientific and racist twaddle in their separate schools, colleges and universities. There has been made available to them all the worst forms of so-called Western culture. The best creations of art, writing, the theatre and cinema which extol the unit of the human family and the need for liberty are only made available in dribs and drabs, whilst the general position is one of a cultural desert.

As far as the non-White people are concerned the picture is one of deprivation all along the line. One has to think hard to discover whether or not there is even a single theatre, drama school, ballet school, college of music to which non-Whites are admitted in South Africa. In Cape Town there is some ridiculously slight opening for Coloured people. Otherwise eighty percent of the people of South Africa are by and large confined to patronizing the few cinemas whose fare is the most inferior type of American cinema art. A vigilant censorship system exist to ensure that these racially separate cinemas do not show non-Whites anything that is considered bad for them by the authorities. It is not only that non-Whites are virtually debarred from the cultural production of mankind, but in addition everything has been done to prevent them developing their own national cultures.

Publishing is strictly controlled. Apart from the most banal form of music, the people are not encouraged or allowed to produce such music as enhances their spirit. The languages of the people are not permitted to be developed by them in their own way. Ignorant and officious White professors sit on education committees as arbiters of African languages and books without consultation with the people concerned. The grotesque spectacle is seen of the White government of South Africa posing as a 'protector' of so-called Bantu culture and traditions of which they know nothing. The arrogance of the fascists knows no bounds! They apparently love African culture more than Africans themselves!

The truth is that they wish to preserve those aspects of the African tradition which contain divisive tendencies likely to prevent the consolidation of the African people as a nation. The forces represented in the present state, after combating education of non-Whites over one hundred years, suddenly decided to take over all education as a state responsibility. The result was the introduction of a racially motivated ideological education; a lowering of standards; the emergence of tribal colleges; and the intensification of racial separation in university education. Science and technology are hardly taught to non-Whites. The training of doctors and other medical personnel is derisory.

The Democratic State shall discover, develop and encourage national talent for the enhancement of our cultural life; all cultural treasures of mankind shall be open to all by free exchange of books, ideas and contacts 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 training shall be opened to all by means of state allowances and scholarships awarded on the basis of merit. Teachers shall have the rights of other citizens to organise themselves and participate in political life. The colour bar in cultural life, sport and education shall be abolished.



There shall be Houses, Security and Comfort!

Migratory labour and its concomitant of separation of families, social problems and distress is one of the tragedies of South Africa. Residential segregation is the order of the day throughout South Africa, with massive shortage of and bad housing for non-Whites, and huge homes and flats most of which are either empty or not fully used, for the White minority.

The infant mortality rate in our country is amongst the highest in the world, and the life expectancy of Africans amongst the lowest. Medical services are haphazard and costly.

The Democratic state established after the victory of the revolution shall ensure the right of people to live where they choose, to be decently housed, and to bring up their family in comfort and security. The vast unused housing space in such areas as the flatlands of Hillbrow and Johannesburg shall be made available to the people. Rent and prices shall be lowered, and adequate amounts of food shall be made available to the people.

A preventative health scheme shall be run by the state. Free medical care and hospitalisation shall be provided for all, with medical care for mothers and young children.

Slums, which have to some extent been demolished in the nine major centres of the country, shall be eliminated in the middle of towns and rural areas where the majority of the people live. New suburbs shall be built where proper facilities shall be provided for transport, lighting, playing fields, crèches and social centres.

The aged, the orphans, the disabled and the sick shall be cared for by the State. Every person shall have the right to leisure, rest and recreation. Fenced locations and racial ghettos shall be abolished and laws which result in the break-up of families shall be repealed.

There Shall be Peace and Friendship!

In the wake of the victorious revolution a Democratic People's Republic shall be proclaimed in South Africa. This shall be a fully independent state which respects the rights and sovereignty of nations. South Africa shall strive to maintain world peace and the settlement of international conflicts by negotiations - not war. Peace and friendship amongst all people shall be secured by upholding the equal rights, opportunities and status of all.

The democratic state shall maintain close neighbourly relations with the states of Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland in the place of the present veiled threats and economic pressure applied against our brothers and sisters in these states by White supremacy. Democratic South Africa shall take its place as a member of the OAU and work to strengthen Pan-African unity in all fields. Our country will actively support national liberation movements of the peoples of the world against imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism. Diplomatic relations will be established with all countries regardless of their social and political systems on the principles of mutual respect of each other's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. The economic and cultural interests of those countries which sympathised with and support the struggle of South Africa for freedom shall be respected.

The revolutionary struggle is in its infancy. It will be a long hard road. To accomplish the glorious task of the revolution, maximum unity among all national groups and revolutionary forces must be created and maintained. All South African patriots whatever their race must take their place in the revolution under the banner of the African National Congress.

Forward to revolution and the victory of the people's programme of liberation!

The Freedom Charter in 2001



Celebrating the implementation of the Freedom Charter

By Jeff Radebe

"We need both architect and bricklayer..."

When the Congress of the people completed drafting the Freedom Charter in 1955, it gave South Africa's future generations an architectural design an overarching model of the society and the government around which they were to mobilise and pursue the objective of the national liberation struggle. It was a design and model, which over the decades was to inspire and guide our revolutionary activity at all conceivable levels of our political, military and constitutional struggles.

The Freedom Charter, for the first time in our history, sketched out in clear terms the central objective of the national democratic struggle. It called for a South Africa which is united in its composition, democratic in its character, non-racial in its political complexion and prosperous in its socio-economic objective.

Its provisions constituted a negation of any form of discrimination on the basis of sex, colour, religion or creed. It captured in vivid terms the composite will of the people.

Any form of construction, however, needs both the architect and the bricklayer. It needs both the act of conception and that of building, the act of designing and that of putting one brick upon the other.

If the Congress of the People in 1955 marked the maturity of conception of the design of our future society, April 27th 1994 called upon all of us to hone our skills in the act of bricklaying."

Extract from Speech by President Thabo Mbeki to the ANC National Constitutional Conference. March 1995.

June 26 is traditionally celebrated in the ranks of the Congress Alliance as SA Freedom Day. This is the day that we recall the adoption of the Freedom Charter at the historic Congress of the People on a dusty soccer field in Kliptown, in 1955. The Charter had grown out of concrete people's struggles; it consolidated resistance to the stretching hand of apartheid; and it built on earlier statements of policy such as the 1943 African Claims and the 1949 Programme of Action.

Since then, its core principles have resounded again and again through slogans and speeches, from the 1969 Morogoro Conference's Revolutionary Programme of the ANC, to the ANC's film *Isithwalandwe: the Story of the Freedom Charter*, specially produced for the 'Year of the Charter' in 1980. The ANC's 1988 Constitutional Guidelines vigorously endorsed the Charter's views and these were echoed in the 1989 Harare Declaration that paved the way for the negotiation phase of the early 1990s. At its centre rests the fundamental call for thorough reconstruction and development of South African society through the national democratic revolution. What a free South Africa needed was a break from the monopoly of white power and privilege.

The vision espoused by the Freedom Charter continues to inspire millions of South Africans in their struggles for a better future. The Charter captures the historic demands of the people of South Africa for a united, non-racial, non-sexist democratic society. In its preamble, the Freedom Charter states that "only a democratic state based on the will of the people can secure to all their birthright without distinction of race, colour sex and creed". The strategic objectives of the National Democratic Revolution are defined in this historic document. The basic national demands in the Charter had propelled struggles of workers, youth, students, women, and rural poor and other popular-democratic forces during the mass uprisings of the 1980s and early 1990s. It was slogans such as "the doors of learning and culture shall be opened" that featured prominently in the struggles of students for a better education that will prepare them for a role in the future of their country.

When we look through our archives, we can draw out a number of quotations and statements interpreting the Freedom Charter and assessing its continuing relevance in South African politics.



Speaking in London in May 1987 at the Business International Conference on Certainties and Uncertainties: Strategic Options for International Companies, the late Oliver Tambo explained:

The Charter embodies the aspirations of our people and does not prescribe the formulas for their realisation. In the context of its parameters, we believe that the issues as to how the wealth of our country is redistributed for the benefit of all our people, how the economy of our country is remoulded in order that all South Africans may thrive and prosper, are of prime importance and should find their solutions in the context of democracy. These are matters requiring the participation of the people; issues to be settled by informed debate and discussion in a democratic and sovereign parliament rather than through street battles.

Today, 14 years after that speech, the struggles of the people of South Africa have brought about a democratic order based on the sovereignty of the people exercised through a Constitution and Bill of Rights that oversees the actions of Parliament and Government. Ever since 1994, the ANC has been at the forefront of all endeavors to build the legislative framework to put flesh on the aspirations of our people. Justice for all and reconciliation of differences between our people stand at the centre of this framework. The needs of our people in each and every area of the Freedom Charter's ten clauses feed debates and discussions, white papers and laws, motions and resolutions. Our three-sphere system of government is designed primarily to accelerate the delivery of services and infrastructure at the local level.

The RDP has built houses, provided jobs through community based public works programmes in rural areas, has delivered telephone and communication systems, electricity, roads and bridges, dams, water and irrigation, schools, and clinics. Just as the Freedom Charter was developed through mass participation, the distinctive features of service delivery and provision of infrastructure through RDP programmes has been and continues to be 'people-driven' in the true spirit of the theme "Batho Pele".

The Freedom Charter also called for an end to exploitation and for economic justice through instruments such as nationalisation and the break-up of monopolies in the country and world. It essentially called for the reorganization of the economy. Clauses such as "the people shall share in the country's wealth" and "the land shall be shared amongst those who work it" reflect both the experiences and the aspiration of the masses. They also reflect a realisation that the sharing in the country's wealth is intricately linked to the imperative for economic growth and development. For it is only a growing economy- an economy that grows without undermining the need for development - that can provide a basis for a better life for all.

It is against this background that the restructuring of state-owned enterprises should be understood. The restructuring of state-owned enterprises forms an integral part of the ANC's strategy for economic transformation, which found its basis in the Freedom Charter. It is a policy informed by the balanced economic policies of the ANC as adopted at various ANC meetings such as the Ready to Govern Conference (1992), RDP Conference, Mafikeng Conference (1997) and the recent NGC. A balanced perspective has always guided the ANC in order to realise its objectives through combining growth and development.

The key objectives informing the restructuring of state-owned enterprises are the following:

- Contributing to economic growth
- Employment creation
- Improved and affordable services to the people n Infrastructure development, and
- Human resources Development.

The intervention of the Government has been aimed at balancing these multiple objectives and ensuring that state-owned enterprises contribute to growth and development. Restructuring is a critical necessity in order to realise the vision and spirit of the Freedom Charter. The call of the Freedom Charter for economic justice and redistribution of resources within and between societies is a critical aspect of this process. This is a vision that the ANC-led progressive movement will never abandon.



The Policy Framework on the Restructuring of State-Owned Enterprises is committed to a strong state, which plays a developmental role. This is necessary in order to deal with the legacies of apartheid, widespread poverty, and unemployment. SOEs in South Africa represent massive financial, investment, labour, technology and infrastructure resources. Restructuring aims to maximise the contribution that these state assets can make to development through the integration of public, private and social capital and expertise. Therefore, Government seeks to restructure SOEs in order to harness the resources towards the development needs of the country.

The ANC's agenda for economic transformation has always been guided by the vision of the Freedom Charter. The ANC recognises the important role of the developmental state in order to achieve social transformation. Its approach seeks to assess, on a case-by-case basis, the role played by the various enterprises in economic development and the improvement of the quality of life of the people. Therefore, it is inconsistent with the ANC's fundamental policy to begin the discussion on whether or not an enterprise should be owned by the state. The balanced approach of the ANC is reflected in various resolutions adopted by conferences held in Mafikeng, and Bloemfontein and at various moments such as during the development of "Ready to Govern", Reconstruction and Development Programme, and very recently, the National General Council. Therefore, the approach to the restructuring of state-owned enterprises has its basis in resolutions of the ANC and the balanced manner in which they seek to achieve progress and transformation. The notion that the Government is on a "mindless rush to privatise state assets" represents a lack of understanding of the nature of the restructuring programme in South Africa and the multiple objectives it seeks to achieve.

Restructuring takes place in conditions different to those when the Freedom Charter was drafted. The Freedom Charter emerged in the period of the Bandung Conference and the struggles of the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America for their freedom and right to self-determination, post-war prosperity in West Europe, and the existence of the USSR and World Socialist System. Therefore, the Freedom Charter has been influenced by these progressive developments, whilst rooted in the struggle of the people of South Africa. The influences of radical currents within and outside of South Africa are reflected in clauses such as "the land shall be shared amongst those who work it" and "the people shall share in the country's wealth".

The restructuring programme aims to achieve the economic transformation as espoused in the Freedom Charter. However, it does this in the context of capitalist domination and globalisation. This period has seen major transformations in the political economy of the world, which have been accompanied by extreme poverty, inequality, and unemployment and extreme marginalisation of the poor. The restructuring of state-owned enterprises and economic and social policy in general should assist in countering these negative tendencies.

It is critical that the restructuring programme should advance the transformation goals as outlined in the Freedom Charter. However, it is important to acknowledge that this process takes place in a completely changed world. Therefore, the commitment should be on the vision and spirit of the Freedom Charter more than the letter of this historic document. Therefore, we are taking the vision and agenda of the Freedom Charter "in circumstances not chosen by ourselves". The South African revolutionary experience is also a contribution to the renewal of the project for fundamental transformation desperately needed as a guide by the struggling peoples of our world.

The restructuring of state-owned enterprises in South Africa and the "prescripts" of the Freedom Charter should be looked at in this context as we accelerate the process of economic transformation. The role that the state has to play in the modern economy is itself a subject of constant transformations.

Although the Charter ends with the clarion call to "fight, side by side, throughout our lives, until we have won our liberty", it began with the statement that we "should spare nothing of our strength and courage, until the democratic changes here set out have been won."

The Freedom Charter represents not just a checklist of things to be done, but also a vision that drives today's Government in its work for fundamental transformation of our society. For in our daily struggles, our people recognise and understand clearly that political freedom provides the space and tools to build the economic emancipation without which our people's lives will remain but empty



shells. So today, when democracy in our country is strengthened day by day, where the benefits of this freedom dig deeper into the soil of our political culture, we must not rest on our laurels - we must take up the struggle against poverty, economic injustice and HIV/AIDS, with the same resolute courage and strength that generations of freedom fighters have over decades of struggle. Where we have made advances, we must consolidate these, using them as bridgeheads to further victories. When our different formations engage each other in various democratic and legitimate structures and institutions, we must not fear the complexity of problems that still face us. Instead, we must resolutely bore to the centre of the problem, identifying all options, and then deciding on the best way forward in the full knowledge that along the way we will make mistakes. But we will also learn from any mistakes we make, taking confidence in the fact that our successes outnumber our weaknesses.

Today, as we re-read the Freedom Charter, we are still struck by the simplicity of its language, its understanding of who our people are, and the moral superiority of its poetry. It remains one of the important human rights charters that stand alongside international documents and statements. It remains a reminder of the unfinished business we have as the ANC and as a people. It remains an inspiration to us all.

The bricks and mortar of a better life for all

When the delegates to the Congress of the People in 1955 said all people shall have the right to live where they choose, be decently housed and to bring up their families in comfort and security they effectively defined the programme of the ANC into the 21st century.

The Congress of the People was the culmination of months of consultation involving thousands of volunteers who crossed the country collecting the demands of the people of South Africa. The Freedom Charter, adopted at the Congress of the People, remains the basic guiding document of the liberation movement in South Africa.

Central among the demands of the people was decent, affordable housing built close to work opportunities, "where all have transport, roads, lighting, playing fields, creches and social centres".

The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), adopted in 1994 as the ANC's plan for transformation, noted the lack of adequate housing in urban townships and rural settlements had reached crisis proportions. In 1990 the urban housing backlog was conservatively estimated at 1.3 million units, rising to three million units if hostels and rural areas were included. It estimated this would increase by an additional 200,000 households each year.

In the first seven years of office, the ANC-led government housed nearly five million people with 1.2 million houses built or under construction. This has largely been achieved through the Housing Subsidy Scheme which provides a housing subsidy of R16,000 to households earning less than R3,500 a month. The scheme has provided beneficiary households with security of tenure, and access to shelter, sanitation, water, roads, and other services such as electricity and telecommunications.

The problem of informal settlements is also highlighted in the Freedom Charter, which says "slums shall be demolished and new suburbs built". The number and size of informal settlements in South Africa has grown dramatically since the Congress of the People as a result of rapid urbanisation and population growth, unemployment, unequal wealth distribution and the scarcity of affordable land for low cost housing.

The government has responded with the informal settlement upgrading programme to convert shacks to proper homes and provide adequate infrastructure and services. Close to 232,000 households have so far been beneficiaries of this programme in around 300 projects nationwide. In some instances, informal settlements are situated on land that cannot be developed, such as in flood plains,

riversides and dumping grounds. This requires the acquisition of new land and the relocation of communities from sometimes potentially dangerous areas.

It is estimated the approximately R3bn which government spends annually through its housing programme sustains 45,000 jobs in the building industry. An additional 43,000 jobs are sustained indirectly in the building materials and components markets.

While housing provision continues, a major challenge still remains the location of new housing closer to employment opportunities and economic and social services. The prohibitive cost of land in many areas has undermined the viability of constructing affordable housing in central areas. Spatial planning at local level needs to more effectively integrate communities racially and economically to effectively undo the effects of apartheid planning. This is being accompanied by an accelerated strategy for the release for development of well-located state land.

Health

The preventive health scheme envisaged in the Freedom Charter, "with special care for mothers and young children", has taken shape over the last seven years with the development of an integrated national health system providing accessible health care services to all South Africans.

Focusing on the provision of primary health care, the new district health system has been able to bring health services within easier reach of about six million people by building 500 new clinics in largely under-served areas.

Health care is free to pregnant women and children under the age of six years. Other programmes to promote women's health include safe terminations of pregnancy, the development of guidelines on screening for cervical cancer, training of forensic nurses to enhance capacity to deal with rape victims, plans to improve access to contraceptive services and enquiry into maternal deaths in childbirth.

Community service for medical students and the strategic use of foreign doctor are among the programmes to address the problem of limited access of rural and urban informal settlements to medical doctors. Government's efforts to make health care more accessible to millions of poor South Africans includes measures like generic substitution, compulsory licensing and parallel importation to significantly lower the cost of medicines.

While the majority of South Africans in 1955 had ample experience of poverty and poor access to health care, they could not have foreseen how these problems would be exacerbated by the HIV/Aids epidemic. The challenges for the health sector are now so much greater, requiring in addition to socio-economic development and strengthening the health sector, the development of strong preventive programme, aggressive treatment of opportunistic infections and targeted and appropriate use of anti-retrovirals. The HIV/Aids epidemic has demonstrated more clearly than anything else the importance to health care of social and economic upliftment across society.

Social development

The Freedom Charter maintains the state needs to play a central role in the protecting and caring for vulnerable groups in society, including "the aged, the orphans, the disabled and the sick". This is at the forefront of current work to develop a comprehensive social security system which will address gaps in government's approach to issues of social inequality, income poverty and food security.

Already government plays a substantial role in alleviating poverty through social security and development programmes. It provides social grants to over 3.5 million people, representing income support for a large number of poor households. The number of caregivers who receive child support grants continues to rise dramatically - more than 1.2 million by May. The government is committed to reaching three million children by 2003.

Pilot projects have been established for unemployed women with children under five years to provide economic and developmental opportunities. They are targeted at women living in deep rural areas and previously disadvantaged informal settlements. Other programmes focus on household food security through the establishment of food production clusters in poor communities, provision of social support structures in communities badly affected by HIV/Aids and poverty, and broadening the skills base and promotion of work opportunities for young people.

The people shall share in the country's wealth!

By Alec Erwin

The people shall share in the country's wealth! These stirring and noble words are contained in the Freedom Charter. The Freedom Charter established the centrality of equity, development and dignity in the economic policy of the ANC and the Alliance. These themes are contained in the Reconstruction and Development Programme drawn up 38 years later in preparation for governance in a new democracy.

What can we gain from reflecting on this document 46 years later? Have we been able in seven years of democracy to realise the letter and spirit of the Freedom Charter? Could we have done this in the present context of a global economy? Whether we have been true to the Freedom Charter has been cause for many a debate.

The difference between the South Africa of apartheid and the present democracy is fundamental. The context of the world economy then and now is also structurally different. However, the economic inequality we confront remains severe. How have we responded to this problem?

What was the context then? The report given the preceding year (1954) to the National Executive Committee of the ANC provides a detailed account of the context, both national and international. On the international front the report applauds 'the victory of the Viet Minhs over the French and Americans'. It records that 'brutal wars are still being waged in Malaya, Kenya, Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco'. This is a time of intense anti-colonial struggle - India and China were new independent powers. The USSR and China heralded a real alternative to imperialism and capitalism. Nationalisation was being implemented and the effects seemed dramatic. These events had to have had an impact on the strategies of the time.

There is a basic political and humanitarian philosophy embedded in the Charter. It seeks to remove injustice and poverty and to restore dignity and material well-being in a society free of prejudice. It is a powerful document made more so by the campaign to draw it up and adopt it in the face of great oppression. These principles are abiding. The more directly economic injunctions to action had to be subjected to much analysis and consideration in the 1990s as we prepared for governance.

The Freedom Charter articulated the need for a mixed economy with the key sectors of mining, banking and monopoly industry 'transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole'. These injunctions are not precise enough to know what the actual outcome would have been. However, the intent is clear - the nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy. As the prospect of governing became more imminent this position was intensely debated. A new formulation began to emerge and it was crystallised in the Ready to Govern document in 1992 and the RDP in 1993. Section 4.2.5. of the RDP sets out the approach that is based on the balance of evidence and allows for 'increasing the public sector in strategic areas and reducing the public sector in certain areas'.

This does move away from the commanding heights formulation. The change reflected a realistic analysis of the efficacy of this type of nationalisation within the new balance of forces in the world economy. Many have argued that this was a fundamental and unjustified change of policy from the Freedom Charter. However, this viewpoint did not prevail at the time the crucial decisions for action were made. We had to devise a policy position that we thought was effective and achievable in the



context. Since all major left parties in government are moving in a similar policy direction, it is likely that we assessed the balance of forces correctly. The position adopted from 1990 was not one of a total abandonment of state involvement in the economy but one based on the balance of evidence in the achievement of an objective. The State remains a powerful force in the economy but its instruments have to be extended and modified. State ownership is not precluded provided it can achieve the objective.

We have introduced laws that control industries and trade 'to assist the well-being of the people'. These take the form of consumer and competition law. These legal forms were not as developed then as they are now. The concern with equity and the well-being of citizens remains as a basic policy objective. The instruments to achieve these are different. Certainly, persons now have the right to enter trades and economic activities, which was another injunction of this section in the Charter.

'There shall be work and security'. Much has been done. There are important areas we have not been able to implement, as we do not have the resources or we have hesitated to enforce a change on a fragile economy. The 40-hour week, called for in the Charter, is subject to an assessment. Its impact on the economy is unclear. A 40-hour week and a stagnant economy is not a worthwhile combination. There are also fundamental changes taking place in the work process.

On balance, where do we stand on the economic injunctions of the Charter? We have changed the instruments to achieve the major objectives and we have a better understanding of the time change takes. However, for a new democracy in a very volatile world economy our success has been of sufficient magnitude to make the prospects of alternatives seem risky.

The doors of learning and culture shall be opened to all

By Kader Asmal

The Freedom Charter's vision for education is contained mainly in Clause 8, entitled The Doors of Learning and Culture Shall be Opened. This vision, though, must be seen within the context of the Charter's overall vision of a South Africa based on the principles of democracy, equality, justice, inclusivity and non-discrimination.

When the Charter was adopted, the notorious Bantu Education System had just been introduced. Separate institutions existed for different racial groups were in the process of being established, with vast disparities in the resources allocated to the different groupings. Most black children still had no access to schooling. Justifying the inferior education for blacks, Hendrick Verwoerd, then the Minister of Native Affairs, said that giving 'the Bantu' the same education as a white person, 'misled him by showing him the green pastures of European society in which he was not allowed to graze'. Verwoerd limited financial allocations for African education and introduced pay scales for African teachers which were lower than those of similarly qualified whites.

In contrast to this oppressive reality, the Freedom Charter offered a vision of free and compulsory schooling of high quality for all children, with higher education and technical training available to all on the basis of merit through the provision of state financial assistance. Adult illiteracy would be ended through 'a mass state education plan.' All racial discrimination in education, sports and culture would be abolished.

Teachers, the Charter says, should have the same rights of all other citizens - reflecting existing restrictions on teachers, especially black teachers - organising themselves and participating in political life. The state would nurture national talent in all spheres of education and culture and encourage the interaction of ideas with all humanity, as well as encouraging values of patriotism, internationalism, liberty and peace. We have made important progress in achieving the ideals of the Charter in education, although much needs to be done to bring the vision to full fruition. Access to education has been increased at all levels. Schooling has been made compulsory for all children and



the National Student Financial Aid Scheme is making it possible for increasing numbers of poor students to attend higher education. Early childhood and further education are being expanded and developed. Teachers now have strong organisations which look after their members' interests and participate in the development of education policy.

Racial segregation is no longer permitted and formerly whites-only schools, colleges, technikons and universities now cater for all population groups. The apartheid curriculum has been swept away and the advent of Curriculum 2005 is introducing greater enlightenment to our classrooms, encouraging critical thinking, creativity, multilingualism and democratic values. Greater democracy has been introduced into the education system with the establishment of elected governing bodies at all schools and the democratisation of governance structures at further and higher education institutions.

Despite these and other achievements, though, it must be acknowledged that major challenges still confront us. The scourge of mass illiteracy remains with us, with nearly half of our adult population being unable to read and write. The recent establishment of the South African National Literacy Initiative seeks to redress this by mounting a large-scale assault on illiteracy.

Even though schooling has been made compulsory for all children, we still have some way to go before it is genuinely free. While it is parents who decide whether schools should charge fees, in practice nearly all schools do charge fees as state funding is inadequate to provide them all with their needs. The Norms and Standards for School Funding ensure that schools in poorer communities get a greater share of state resources to help them raise their standards of provision.

However, we need to recognise that the private resources (mainly through school fees) available to schools in wealthier communities have ensured that the gap between rich and the poor schools has not narrowed to the extent anticipated and desired. The Ministry of Education is giving priority attention to this matter.

The quality of education in many of our institutions still remains a concern. The Higher Education Quality Committee as well as the whole school evaluation and systemic evaluation initiatives for schooling are among the measures put in place to undertake the task of the improving educational quality.

The ANC and the government remain committed to the ideals of the Freedom Charter, as demonstrated by the progress made so far. We will continue to seek ways to overcome the remaining obstacles to bring about a genuinely enabling and liberating education system for all our people.

The key to building a winning nation

Since the 1994 democratic elections, the ANC has been at the head of tangible and far-reaching changes in South Africa's education system in pursuit of the vision described in the Freedom Charter.

Two years ago, in his State of the Nation address, President Thabo Mbeki said "education and training must constitute the decisive driver in our efforts to build a winning nation". It is in this spirit that the development of education and training has been placed at the centre of government's transformation programme.

In 1994, the pre-democratic government was spending five times as much per white learner than, for example, a black learner in the Transkei. Since 1994, government has succeeded in reducing the differential between provinces by more than 50 per cent. Nonetheless, there is still a long way to go in achieving equity in the schooling system.

The government has been successful in bringing the number of learners per educator down to an average of 34 nationally. The rationalisation process has resulted in over 30,000 teachers being moved to new posts in schools where they are most needed, without a single forced retrenchment.



This has made a dramatic difference in many poorer schools. The School Funding Norms and Standards policy, which took effect in 1999, mandates a "poverty-targeted" approach to budgeting for non-personnel expenditure by the provinces. This means the poorest schools get, on average, seven times more funding than the richest ones.

In 1996 the Department of Education undertook the first ever school infrastructure survey. From that first survey to the most recent, in 2000:

- there has been a decline from 43 to 35 in the average number of students to a classroom;
- the per centage of students without access to proper toilet facilities declined from 55 per cent to 16 per cent. This translates into a decline from 6.6 million to 1.9 million students;
- schools without telephones has decreased from 59 to 34 per cent;
- the per centage of schools without access to running water declined from 40 to 34 per cent; access to electricity has improved from 40 to 53 per cent of all schools. The Eastern Cape has shown an increase of 25 per cent;
- the number of schools with computers has increased from 2,241 to 6,481. In Gauteng, only 16 per cent of schools are now without computers.

The backlog is still huge and the difference between rich and poor schools within the public system still unacceptable. Under the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) education is to receive R1.5 billion in additional funds as a conditional grant for physical infrastructure. While three years ago the department spent around R200 million on learner support material, this year it will be spending just over R1 billion.

The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) has facilitated the entry of large numbers of students who would otherwise simply not have been able to go to university or technikon. Since 1996 government's contribution to the scheme has been over R2 billion to the benefit of well over 200,000 students. In this budget alone, R 450 million is earmarked for the NSFAS with at least an additional R150 million recouped from loan repayments from past students.

Enrolment in schools has increased dramatically. Compared to other developing countries, South Africa currently has one of the highest enrolment rates for children of school-going age. Over twelve million students are in school, representing more than 90 per cent of all children between the ages of seven and fifteen years. Most of the gains have been among poor, African and rural children. South Africa's participation rate for girls is among the highest in the world. The matric pass rate for 2000 increased by 9 per cent, and a further minimum of 5 per cent is expected in 2001, with improvements particularly among the worst performing schools to which special attention is being paid. This year the department will also target mathematics, science, technology and history and ensure there are trainers on the ground from next year for maths and science.

Much work still needs to be done to provide education to learners in a safe and productive environment. To this end, the department has made school effectiveness, school management and teacher professionalism one of its chief priorities. It is also focusing on the review and streamlined implementation of the new outcomes-based curriculum, Curriculum 2005. This approach to education is aimed, to borrow the words of Prof Edward Said, at the activation rather than the stuffing of minds.

Adopted in 1997, the government's policy on language in education in says "being multilingual should be a defining characteristic of being South African". This requires putting into place dual-medium education and ensuring all South Africans, regardless of their mother tongues, learn at least one other South African language well enough to be able to communicate fluently and effectively in them.

Literacy

Government is determined to "break the back" of illiteracy in South Africa by 2004. There are about 6 million functionally illiterate adults in the country. When the first national audit of public adult learning centres was published in July 2000 there were 2,226 public adult learning centres and 13,628 teachers. But there were only 271,701 students, mainly at further education and training levels. Implementation of a strategic plan to address this will begin in June 2001 in Gauteng and KwaZulu



Natal and later during the year expanded to the 18 rural and urban development nodes throughout the country.

HIV/Aids

Education is central to counteract HIV/AIDS. Most children enter the education system HIV-negative; an unacceptable number leave school HIV-positive, and many more become HIV-positive shortly after leaving. If the education system were able to influence children's ideas about sex and relationships even before these start, it would play a key role in changing the course of the epidemic.

The education department's response to HIV/AIDS has been declared the "priority which underlies all priorities". This response includes a number of key projects: HIV/AIDS within and across the curriculum; workplace policies and programmes for all staff including educators; the development of a national plan that aligns planning and management systems; and the development of a system of responding to the needs of the ever increasing numbers of orphans and learners in distress or with special needs due to HIV/AIDS.

Introducing the education budget vote in parliament last week, Education Minister Kader Asmal said his department was never satisfied: "If we are to live up to the public claims of cherishing all the children of the nation equally, then we must work in unity, with professionalism and with passion to achieve this moral imperative."

A deeply spiritual document

By Cedric Mayson

During the years of the struggle it was illegal to produce or possess copies of the Freedom Charter. At the Christian Institute offices in Braamfontein (where Beyers Naude was Director) we had state-of-the-art one-at-a-time rotary duplicators, and an early photocopy machine. With scissors and paste we reduced the Freedom Charter to fit on to a single page of foolscap paper, and after hours, when most of the staff had gone home, produced tens of thousands of copies.

Out at his church in Kagiso, Rev Frank Chikane had an adult literacy scheme which also used duplicators, and also ran after-hours production lines for the Charter. As those illegal copies were circulated through the country, no one knew they had been produced in secret by religious organisations.

The Freedom Charter is a deeply spiritual document. Every clause of it can be supported by chapter and verse quotations from the Bible, the Quoran, the Hindu Scriptures, and other holy books. It is rooted in the great religious concepts revealed to humanity through the ages: justice, peace, liberty, government, authority, land, 'brotherhood', opportunity, freedom.

Plenty of religious people attacked the Freedom Charter and in doing so revealed the way in which so many of them were supporting fallacies of faith, rather than the real thing. Two false religious positions in particular were exposed by the Charter - and they must be spelt out again because these heresies are still promoted by conservative right-wing forces today.

The first was that religion was only concerned with private goodness, and with the progress of individual souls to heaven. In fact the scriptures make clear that religion is concerned about the whole of human life, about society, justice, loving our neighbour, the land, and the role of peoples and cultures. Jesus proclaimed to the suffering people of his age that Gods Ruling Power (the 'kingdom of God') was operating on Earth to redeem the poor and oppressed and down-trodden, to bring a new birth to the rich and religious traditionalists, and give light and life to the Scribes and Pharisees who were the fundamentalists of his day.



It was not only a heavenly vision, but an earthly vision too. The life of the human spirit cannot be separated from the human body, human mind, and human community which make us all tick. Jesus was enforcing the vision of the prophets both before and after him in all religions, and the same insights appear constantly in the Freedom Charter.

The second fallacy was that the main focus and concern of religion was to run churches, mosques, temples, and synagogues. Such people sought to separate religion and God from government, politics, economics and social responsibilities, and confine religion to promoting religious institutions. It is a total nonsense, which can only be maintained by stuffing the scriptures of the world into the shredder.

The spiritual realities within the human community which most of us call the Spirit of God can never be confined within the walls and concepts of religious structures. Even those who withdraw into a full time life of prayer and contemplation do it for the glory and fulfilment of God in the whole of creation - and that includes the visions spelt out in the Freedom Charter.

It was not a mistake that Fr Huddleston and other religious personnel were at Kliptown in 1955. One of the great needs of today is for religious people to study the Freedom Charter again and rediscover and reinterpret its truths for the generation which is moving from liberation to transformation.

Under the old Supreme Court in Pretoria there were some large holding cells where prisoners were kept when the Court above was having an adjournment. The walls had originally been painted white, but over the years had been covered with the most unusual graffiti. People had written up long lists of those who had been tried for treason, from way back, with summaries of charges and sentences and political slogans. There were two complete copies of the Freedom Charter which people had known by heart and inscribed on those basement walls, so that the foundations of the Supreme Court were quite literally set in the Freedom Charter.

I spent a couple of weeks there in 1983 but it was impossible to feel alone. All the great ones of the past had been there, and standing reading the Freedom Charter under those circumstances was a deeply spiritual experience. Treason? Utter nonsense! This is what humanity and God were all about.

It still is.

Charterists: youth identity in the '80s

By Sandile Dikeni

In the midst of the eighties I once walked into an identity concept that surprised me as much as it scared the hell out of me. 'Charterist' was the tag.

The scene was Nyanga East, a township on the Cape Flats. East, as it is known, is one of those townships that in my opinion boasts some of the most wondrous intellectual talents in the progressive democratic circles, but plays second fiddle to Gugulethu and Langa for reasons that are hidden away in the histories of these hellholes. Brain to brain, however, I still think of this township and the quality of its activists as one big gem in the consciousness of the young anti-apartheid activists in the eighties.

Nyanga East shares a close proximity to rough hellholes like Philippi, Crossroads, KTC (which had a part called "Beirut") and Nyanga Bush, just to mention a few scenarios that constituted a social nightmare in the haphazard arrangement of urban settlement in the Cape. Needless to say, many of the activists of the East were averse to the conditions of their neighbours let alone their own miserable set up. At one point or another, many of the activists in this township must have had some close shave with either the witdoeke, a notorious cop called Barnard, or some of the vigilante forces in



what is called, for want of a better description, the taxi industry. But certainly one of their most testing experiences was the criminal element in some strangely organised phenomena called iNtsara.

How the Ntsara came to being is certainly a moot point. A vague clue to the rise of this gang must have to do with the state of siege in the eighties. One of the first things that happened with the repression on community organisations in Cape Town was the rise of crime, especially amongst the youth. iNtsara epitomised that rise of crime. Another element was apathy.

Apathy was so great, it was a common sight to watch iNtsara marching in some disorganised way down some main road in Nyanga East brandishing every kind of weapon imaginable. In one of these exhibitions of gang power, I had the unpleasant opportunity to witness the false sense of authority that gangsterism and mob psychology grants young people. This particular march was led by a thug called uThyopho. Thyopho was a young boy, who earned his flamboyancy by undressing himself to the waist and making extremely strange noises and blood curdling ululations while he led his troop of nearly a hundred or so 'skeptels' who felt absolutely untouchable. In this crazy spell, Thyopho, brandishing some quite dangerous looking dagger, would momentarily stop, throw himself to the ground mutter some more of his strange words, and then roll to the pavement and start sharpening his assegai to the absolute glee of his followers.

Quite fascinated by this exhibition, I dared ask one of the comrades, what is he saying? "Death to the Charterists" came the reply. "Who were the charterists?" I ventured. It came out that everyone of the youth who did not fall under the tag apathetic was viewed as a charterist by the gang in Nyanga East! It was a fascinating revelation that said much more about the Freedom Charter than Raymond Suttner could have thought.

Charterism more than a mere affiliation to a historic moment in the 1950's had a greater attribute. It presented itself not merely as a galvanising force for a conscious youth in a time of repression but also as an identity for progressive youth. What was more fascinating was that the identity was not an appropriated one but one given from outside the ambits of the progressive youth workshop. But not only that, it was also accepted that the Freedom Charter was the basis of a particular youth movement that stood outside the framework of a despondency that forced the mainstream youth into the macabre yet realistic ambit of crime as identity. This suggested that even the criminals of the era of repression had a particular discourse about the Freedom Charter.

"Why was this?" I kept on wondering for sometime. My own thinking was and still is the accessibility of the intellectual ideal embedded in the Charter. The depth of meaning supplied by the Freedom Charter in its popular form was such that it lent itself to debate by anyone in society. With hindsight, I also mused the history of the document and the role that the ANC Youth League of the fifties might have played in its construction and representation.

As a tool of organisation the Freedom Charter challenged certain sensitive points about being young in this country. While it poised itself as document of great depth insofar as the broad ideals of a future society was concerned it also made itself a popular document by providing a home for the venturing mind of youth. Precisely because it avoided being a blue print it presented itself as a point of controversy and therefore as a challenge to straight thinking. This is the rallying point for the young intellectual. The Charter became a sexy document because it gave scope for a much broader discourse and debate as laid down in its ten points.

It was also made the more interesting by the existence of the other two documents: the Azanian Manifesto and the Ten Point Programme of the New Unity Movement.

The weakness of the two other documents was that they presented foolproof arguments that allowed no further discourse because they searched for perfection. Youth hates perfection. Conscious youth hates prescription. This explains why Thyopho and some of the criminals were so irritated by the Charterists. They needed a straightforward path from alienation and the ideals of the Freedom Charter do not supply that quick fix.



It needs to be said however that Thyopho and co finally lost the battle, because while the conscious youth were not gang material there was nothing wrong with their self-defence mechanisms. In the name of the Freedom Charter the gang was driven out of Nyanga East and those who remained became Charterists. This was done without the assistance of Barnard, who died in a gun battle later. Rumour also has it that Thyopho also left the world at the knifepoint of another of his cronies.

Congress of the People - I was there

On the 25th anniversary of the Congress of the People, a delegate to that historic occasion describes the work involved in its preparation and the atmosphere and spirit of Kliptown, June 25-26 1955.

Reprinted from Sechaba -June 1980.

June 25 and 26 1955 are dates indelibly impressed on the minds and hearts of every Congress member who was active at the time. They are the dates of the Congress of the People, which was held at Kliptown to discuss and finally adopt the historic Freedom Charter, which forms the basis of our policy today. On those two days we witnessed the climax of months of effort on the part of thousands of Congress men and women throughout the country striving for the liberation of their country from the yoke of apartheid. In the Freedom Charter they set out the details of the kind of South African society they wanted to see when the day of liberation dawned.

The Congress of the People was brought about through the efforts of Joint Congress Committees which were established throughout the country comprising the African National Congress, the SA Indian Congress, Coloured People's Organisation (later the SA Coloured People's Congress), and the Congress of Democrats - whites who identified with the Congress movement. The SA Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), formed in March 1955, was not yet part of the Joint Consultative Committee, though it passed a resolution of support for the COP campaign at its founding congress and fully associated itself with the Congress Alliance. The South African Communist Party, although reconstituted since 1953, had not yet publicly declared its existence so that, although its members were active in all the Congresses, it did not participate as a separate entity.

Meetings to mobilise the people for the Congress of the People and gather in their demands and wishes for incorporation in the Charter were held everywhere - at factories at lunch-time, in the townships, villages and suburbs in the evenings and over weekends. Many of our best speakers had already been banned from attending meetings under the Suppression of Communism Act, so in many places it was left to the second string to fill the gaps, and to do even more because the number of people who could be active publicly was restricted by the bannings. The slogan for the Congress of the People - "a delegate from every town, every suburb, every village"-was what we had in mind, and it was an ideal that came near to 100% fulfillment.

The meetings were held to elect delegates to the Congress and also to put forward the demands of the people for incorporation in the Freedom Charter itself. For this was a document which was intended to be our blueprint for the future South Africa, and it was the aim and hope of all of us that the people of South Africa would take the chance to help create their own future. Day by day as the meetings were held and the resolutions began to roll in, it was remarkable to see the similarity of the demands voiced on all sides although not really surprising when one considers that the people everywhere suffered from the same disabilities. The complaint everywhere was first and foremost about the iniquitous pass laws, then about Bantu Education, forced removals, high rents.... Everywhere the people knew that until they had the right to vote they would never have the power to get what they wanted.

Money also had to be collected to send delegates up to the Congress in Kliptown. Our comrades collected money in pennies, in shillings and pounds, from audiences at meetings, from their neighbours, from people in buses and trains. The sight of the dog-eared notes coming in from all over the Western Cape, which was where I worked - hundreds of them brought in by our comrades returning from meetings - was an assurance that our efforts were meeting with a wholehearted



response. And Head Office was besieged with bits of paper posted from everywhere in the country setting out the demands of the people.

When the great day of the Congress of the People was upon us, we set out on our journey to Kliptown, many of us travelling hundreds of miles, wondering what was going to happen. For it was not as if we had been allowed to campaign in peace. Every meeting was watched by the special branch, our organisers were hounded and arrested, documents seized in raids.

Not all the people's elected delegates were able to reach the congress. Cars and lorries were stopped, contingents held back on one or other pretext until it was too late to continue their journey. Yet in spite of all the harassment and interference, about 3,000 delegates pierced the police cordon and arrived at Kliptown, just outside Johannesburg, where a patch of open ground had been prepared to seat the huge throng. Just imagine the problems of organisation - 3,000 delegates had to be fed and housed. But from every point of view the Congress was an outstanding success. Politically, organisationally, emotionally, it was truly representative of all the people in South Africa - not like that mockery called Parliament in Cape Town! Our Congress of the People really belonged to and spoke for the people of our country, reflecting their aspirations and hopes, their determination and courage, their faith in the future, their ability and inventiveness.

I believe now, as I did then, that the Freedom Charter is a revolutionary document. It lays the foundation for the national democratic revolution, stating in clear and simple terms the demands of the people - demands which cannot be full-filled unless the whole apartheid structure of South Africa as we know it today is overturned. There are some who say the Freedom Charter is out of date because it is 25 years old. Of course nothing is immutable. The Freedom Charter is not immutable, it can be changed if the people want to change it. But Freedom is not out of date, and the people's demand for freedom has not changed. On the contrary, it has gained in intensity, and led the people to adopt new and more forceful methods to achieve their objective. But that objective is still to destroy the apartheid state and build a new society - and the Freedom Charter still tells us what kind of society we want to see in South Africa. Its words ring as true today as when they were first framed.

But what of the days of the Congress of the People itself, those two days in 1955 when the first real parliament of South Africa was convened? Perhaps one can best compare it to a festival - except that our business was serious, and except for the presence of the special branch, peering at the delegates through field glasses, taking notes of the speeches, and finally on the second day surrounding the whole gathering with their uniformed police and military men armed with stun guns while the name and address of every delegate was taken down.

So why a festival? As one approached Kliptown (and I and others had driven 1,000 miles to get there), one could see the streams of other delegates arriving - some in cars, some in buses, others in carts or on foot, many carrying banners and wearing colourful national dresses for a gala occasion.

At the fenced-in, open-air forum of the congress itself there were banners displayed from all over South Africa - from Natal, East Cape, West Cape and other places. And of course there were many delegates there without display of any sort to protect themselves; they had in fact to pretend they were not there at all. These delegates were mainly from the rural areas, liable to victimisation from employers and police if their presence was discovered. But despite all the intimidation and danger, they were there.

Before the congress started, groups of people were singing freedom songs. When the police staged their invasion on the second day and the delegates found themselves surrounded, the tension was so great that a spark could have set off a conflagration. But it was Ida Mntwana who kept the crowd peaceful by starting the singing of freedom songs from the platform. The buzz of anger died down and the defiant songs of freedom filled the air. The people continued with the business of the congress, and the clauses of the Freedom Charter were discussed and adopted while the police were taking down names.

Meal times were an important feature. We had signs up "soup with meat" and "soup without meat" to cater for the religious scruples or preferences of the delegates. The police thought these signs had



some hidden political significance, and they were later handed in as evidence in the treason trial which was the government's reply to the congress. During these lunch-breaks, we met and mingled with delegates from other centres, and made friendships and forged bonds which have endured to this day and will continue to thrill us throughout our lifetime.

There were a lot of marvelous people at Congress of the People and a lot of marvelous people worked to make it a success - ordinary men and women who make South Africa such an exciting place to live in. But I think of all the people with whom I worked for the Congress, perhaps the most impressive was the late John Mtini. He was a member of the African National Congress, almost 70 years old at that time, but young at heart, with the spirit, enthusiasm and energy of someone 50 years his junior. He lived with his wife in a tiny pondokkie in Elsie's River, near Cape Town. Despite ailing health, he never spared himself. When the Congress called, he answered. Inspired by the whole concept of the congress, he organised his whole area, and used to come into the office with wads of £1 notes that he had collected to help cover the cost of transport. He himself collected enough money to send 12 people to the Congress. He used to bring in his money with a wonderful smile of satisfaction on his face, thrilled at the response of the people.

The awards of Isitwalandwe, the speeches from the platform, the general atmosphere, all contributed to make the weekend of the Congress of the People a truly memorable one. People from all over South Africa had come together, met one another, discussed their common problems, reached their decisions, adopted the Freedom Charter. We had signposted the way to another and better South Africa. The Congress of the People and the Freedom Charter represented a shattering setback for the government - the time and effort they put into the treason trial showed that. The people had demonstrated they would never accept apartheid, would never submit, would resist repression, would continue to fight for liberation until final victory was won and South Africa was set free. The Freedom Charter has inspired the people in their struggles throughout the past 25 years, and continues to inspire them.

The Revolutionary Alliance

Let us consolidate the revolutionary movement for faster change

Extracts from a statement of the National Executive Committee of
29 September - 1 October 2000

The NEC, meeting for the first time after our historic National General Council, in the wake of the National Conference against Racism and the 7th National Congress of our Alliance partner COSATU, deliberated over a number of key challenges and identified specific strategic tasks for advancing and deepening the NDR.

The ANC cadres emerged from the NGC mindful of and equal to the challenges posed by the new international situation, the advancement of the African renaissance and the immense expectation from our people that we work with them to speed up change and deepen the National Democratic Revolution in South Africa.

A key programmatic task arising from the NGC therefore is how we continue to develop, empower, affirm and expand this dedicated pool of cadres. The ongoing political development of this cadreship must empower them to engage in the debates and discussions of the challenges of economic and social transformation, the transformation of the state and our society and changing the international environment; in addition to their involvement in mass work and campaigns, and their political work in sectoral formations and the Alliance.

The affirmation of our cadres is key to strengthening the capacity of the movement to give leadership to the mass of our people in communities and to our society as a whole. Without this dedicated army



of cadres, the movement will not be able to fulfill its historic mission of transforming our country into a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic country.

The Revolutionary Alliance

The NEC reflected on the workings of the Alliance and grappled with the difficulties facing the Revolutionary Alliance. These difficulties have expressed themselves over the last period around macro economic policy, around strategic questions such as the transformation of the public service and the role of public service unions; the absence of joint mass alliance programmes (besides election campaigns) and in the practice of Alliance partners, increasingly debating matters central to the transformation of our country in the media, rather than engaging with each other in a comradely manner and in appropriate fora. The NEC in doing this introspection reflected on the relationship between the ANC and each of our alliance partners.

Our alliance with the South African Communist Party is a relationship cemented in the trenches of our struggle against Apartheid colonialism. This Alliance has manifested itself in its organisational form over the years in the practice of dual membership between the ANC and the SACP, with communists often being seen as amongst the most dedicated and committed in working to strengthen the liberation movement. This, and our ongoing engagements on the strategic and political challenges facing us in our fight against the common enemy represented by the Apartheid ruling bloc, enhanced our cohesiveness as individual organisations, as well as a revolutionary alliance.

The NEC noted that this has changed since 1990, with the revolutionary Alliance and its component members being faced with new challenges. The ANC and SACP agree on the most central questions facing the National Democratic Revolution in the current phase. We agree about the good practice learnt from a history of dual and multiple membership within Alliance partners.

However, over the last few years we have been faced with many occasions when, instead of acting in the traditions of a revolutionary alliance that has endured as much as ours, the clamour for a public assertion of autonomy takes precedence over fundamental questions that unite us. The spirit of political and ideological engagement, and the practice of consultations that have characterised the Alliance have also somewhat dissipated.

The NEC discussed the evolution of the progressive trade union movement in South Africa and the important role it has played in the struggle for national liberation and against the super-exploitation of black and female workers under Apartheid colonialism. It noted that trade unions, by their very definition, tend to organise themselves to struggle for the improvement of the working conditions of their members. They are therefore not inherently progressive, especially in relation to wider issues of social justice. We acknowledge the legitimacy of such a focus for the trade union movement. However it cannot be seen as the sole focus of the ANC nor even a revolutionary trade union movement with the responsibility to pursue the transformation of our society in its entirety.

The national liberation movement and the party of the working class (the SACP) have therefore played an important role in the evolution of the progressive trade union movement in South Africa, towards it becoming a central part of the liberation forces and the revolutionary Alliance. The ANC and the SACP have achieved this over the decades through consistent and tireless political work in the trade union movement and amongst the working class broadly.

Since the democratic breakthrough of 1994 we have achieved, not only a decisive move away from white minority rule, but from the oppressive labour relations that formed one of the cornerstones of apartheid colonialism. The NEC reflected on the impact that the process of globalisation has had on working people, the impact of changes in productive processes and the labour market on workers and the poor, and in particular on trade union movements across the globe.

The South African trade union movement, and COSATU in particular, have to face not only these challenges confronted by their counterparts in the world, but also changes brought about by the transformation and restructuring of the economy, of building a democratic and developmental state; whilst at the same time beginning to address the social deficit of Apartheid.



These changes have impacted on the union movement, manifested in developments such as:

- The shrinking of the mining sector which historically employed a large percentage of the organised working class;
- The restructuring process in the manufacturing and retail sector and job losses in the formal sector, outsourcing and casualisation;
- The changes in the agricultural sector and the difficult process of protecting the rights and security of tenure of farm workers;
- The restructuring of the state owned enterprises;
- The growth of 'new economic sectors' such as information, communications and technology;
- The growth of public sector unions, who were harshly suppressed prior to 1990. Since then there has been a growth of public sector unions, and they are now the biggest component of the federation. This has caused tensions as to how these 'new unions' as employees of an ANC government and as part of the structures within the Alliance should interact with programmes designed to transform the public service and build a developmental state.

These are amongst the very complex challenges facing the union movement and indeed the Alliance as a whole. These challenges are not merely about 'trade union' or 'shop floor issues'. They are fundamental to the strategic objectives of the NDR, of liberating Africans in particular and black people in general from political and economic bondage; of uplifting the quality of life of all South Africans, especially the poor.' ([Strategy and Tactics. 1997](#))

We therefore make a distinction between trade union consciousness (in pursuit of real improvements in the working conditions of their members) and political consciousness (participating in the national liberation movement with other classes to resolve the national question and giving leadership to community issues). An element of political consciousness is class consciousness (an understanding of workers' place in society and the alliances they form in pursuit of their long term objectives).

The reduction of political and class consciousness to the mouthing of revolutionary-sounding phrases can lead to serious tactical errors. For example, the silence of the COSATU 7th Congress Declaration on the issue of racism, even insofar as it affects workers in the workplace, in the mines and on farms; its silence on the role of capital in job losses and the low levels of investment; the tendency in the pronouncements of some of the senior leadership to seek media publicity at the expense of the ANC and government - all this reflects a short-coming that requires urgent attention.

The ANC acknowledges that with the enormous challenges of coming to grips with governance and the process of driving through-going transformation, it has not paid sufficient attention to its responsibility towards the trade union movement. This responsibility includes ongoing engagement on the strategic questions facing the country, the union movement and the Alliance in general; political work within this crucial component of the Alliance and supporting the struggles of the millions of members of COSATU, who are also ANC members.

As a result, a climate of misunderstanding may develop. This climate can create space for ultra-left tendencies, which seek to alienate workers from the national liberation movement and from the democratic government that continues to be their best and only hope for a better life. It can also provide space for a tendency inadvertently to want to define the secondary contradictions among the forces of revolutionary change as the primary focus of workers' struggles, at the expense of the strategic tasks facing the working people in this phase of the NDR. Naturally, these tendencies will receive encouragement and praise from forces opposed to the fundamental transformation of South African society.

Immediate tasks

- a. The ANC should have ongoing bilateral meetings with the SACP to discuss roles in the current phase of the NDR, our common programme and relations between the party and the movement.
- b. We must develop political guidelines on the role of ANC cadres in mass formations for discussion in the movement and the Alliance.



- c. An Alliance Lekgotla, focusing on the theoretical, strategic, tactical and programmatic challenges facing the NDR, should follow 10-aside meetings.
- d. The ANC must regard the leadership of COSATU as leaders in the ANC, with access to the leadership of the movement to ensure mutually enriching interactions on the key questions facing our country.
- e. We must ensure that we regularly share information on government, international work and on our campaigns amongst ourselves.
- f. We must engage this leadership as part of our broader programme to affirm the cadreship of the movement and the Alliance, through our cadre and human resource development programme.
- g. The ANC must give human and organisational support to the endeavors of the trade union movement to service its members and to engage in the difficult challenges faced by various unions in the sectors where they operate.
- h. Engage the public sector unions, and the public service union in particular, as a movement and as government, on issues of the relationship between the unions and the democratic government and the strategic task of transforming the public service.
- i. Engage the whole of the trade union movement and workers in general around issues of social transformation, including the formulation of public policy, the transformation of the state and the implementation of political and socio-economic programmes to build a better life for all.
- j. Actively work to strengthen the trade union movement at all levels through participating in political education programmes, helping to build COSATU locals and assisting with organising of difficult sectors such as domestic and farm-workers and the unemployed.
- k. Encouraging our members to organise and join unions where they exist, including through the structures of the Youth and Women Leagues; and recruiting workers into ANC branches.
- l. Work with the federation to achieve the cherished objective of One Industry One Union and of One country One Federation.

Common objectives of the Alliance

[Contextual interpretation of ANC Strategy and Tactics]

Introduction

Common objectives of the Tri-partite Alliance are defined by the content of the NDR. How these objectives are pursued by each component is dictated to, in the first instance, by the relationship between class and national elements of the struggle in the current phase.

The environment in which the Allies operate also impacts on how they relate to one another. This includes the national and international balance of forces, and the fact of the position of the democratic movement in government.

Character of the NDR

The strategic objective of the NDR is the creation of a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society. This means political liberation of Africans in particular and black people in general, and uplifting the quality of life of all South Africans, the majority of whom are African and female. It means deracialisation of South African society in all its elements and the reshaping of gender relations.

This requires the establishment of a democratic state, based on a democratic constitution, in which formal expressions of democracy are backed up by people-centred and people-driven programmes. The motive forces of the NDR should build a democratic state, among others, by ensuring that all levers of power are in the hands of the collective of forces that pay allegiance to, and pursue the multifaceted provisions of the Constitution.



Because of the symbiotic link between South African capitalism and national oppression, national democracy, to be meaningful, has to include reconfiguration of property relations in a number of ways. Deracialisation of society, including patterns of ownership of productive property and distribution of wealth, means, among others, pouring massive resources into uplifting conditions of the poor and providing opportunities for blacks in economic, social, cultural and other spheres.

Such efforts require the pooling of resources in the hands of the state, including the fiscus and parastatals, as well as social capital, to attain the objective of reshaping property and social relations. However, the NDR does not eliminate the basic antagonisms between capital and labour. There will be decisive intervention to regulate the operation of market forces in the interest especially of the poor and the disadvantaged; but the market remains a critical element in the economic system.

The democratic state faces the challenge of managing these and other social contradictions, as it seeks to reshape social relations to build a better life for all. This includes creative management of the dynamic of "unity and struggle" in our relations with private capital.

Motive forces and concepts of struggle

The basic contradictions within South African society threw up a myriad of national and class forces as the motive forces of the NDR. These forces are made up of Africans, coloured and Indian communities and democratic whites. In class terms, these forces include the working class (employed and unemployed), the rural masses, black professionals and black business-people.

South African capitalism gave birth to a collective of black workers whose position in the socio-economic system, numbers, activism and organisation placed them at the head of the struggle for freedom. The working class therefore developed to win the confidence of the motive forces of change because most of its interests coincide with those of the majority. In this sense, among others, the class and national struggles find common expression.

How then is each of these struggles defined?

The national struggle is a political struggle for national liberation. It brings together a variety of motive forces impelled by their own self interest and the general national interest. Their objective socio-economic conditions dictate that the quest for political freedom should be combined with a challenge to colonial property relations.

The individual struggles of the various sectors for an improvement in their conditions - in education, civic matters, at the factory floor and elsewhere - do not in themselves constitute a national political struggle for liberation. Rather, on their own, they could remain confined in the realm of reformism. Historically, the intervention of advanced elements in society brought to the fore the complex links between these issues and the overarching imperative of national liberation.

The class struggle in its most advanced form, under capitalism, is a political struggle for social emancipation. It brings together the working people, led by the working class, ultimately to create a society in which there is no exploitation, nor classes. Similarly, the actions of the working people to improve their economic conditions do not on their own constitute a class political struggle. The latter requires the intervention of advanced elements.

National and class struggle

The history of national and class struggle is one of mutual influence between these elements. As the working class appreciated the link between its class position and the property question, so did it infuse greater progressiveness into the content of the national struggle. But the realisation of the link between social conditions and the political system of colonialism was a critical element in inculcating political consciousness at all among the working class.



As such, to a large extent, national political consciousness was a critical route to class political consciousness, on the part of the working class. In practice, the immediacy of the national grievance means that the working class exercises its struggle for social emancipation, in this phase, within the context of the national struggle.

It is against this background that the ANC Morogoro Conference asserted that the working class is the dynamic link between national liberation and socialism. This assertion reflected both the acceptance on the part of the ANC of the legitimacy and logic of the struggle for socialism and, consequently, the extent to which progressive nationalism had permeated the ranks of the ANC.

Does it therefore mean that the ANC had adopted or could and should adopt socialism as its ultimate objective? The answer is, no! The ANC was and remains the embodiment of the collective of organised forces that seek to resolve the national contradictions within South African society, at the same time as it tackles relevant socio-economic relations. It is on this account, the vanguard of the NDR, the leader of the Tripartite Alliance. It is in the objective interest of the socialist movement, and the SACP as the vanguard of this movement, that this should be the case. In the first instance, it seeks to unite all the real and potential motive forces for a national democratic revolution - and not to isolate itself in a cocoon of socialist purity. Secondly, recognising the immediacy of the national question, it views the NDR as the shortest route to socialism, in a continuum of struggle.

Leadership role of the working class

As such, a revolutionary working class is, both from the point of view of its immediate and long-term interests, as well as its objective position in the socio-economic system, meant to be the most active, dynamic and far-sighted class in the national democratic struggle. This it does, not as a class apart, but as part and at the head of, the motive forces of the NDR.

How should this manifest itself in the current phase? This should express itself, among other things, in workers' day-to-day struggles, in the mastery of the strategy and tactics of the national struggle, in its appreciation of a given balance of forces and the course to follow in a particular conjuncture, in its creative articulation of the interests of all the motive forces and in its activism within the national liberation movement.

Yet in this phase, one of the critical questions we face is, if the working class has to lead in the process of transformation, what is the totality of the instruments available for this purpose? If it has to play a leading role in the ANC, where is the ANC to be found?

These questions speak to the new conditions of struggle: in addition to mass organisation and mobilisation, today we also have to utilise state institutions, including Parliament. Working class activists also have to be found at the coalface of these new instruments, besides their presence in these institutions as public sector employees. This demands a delicate balancing act between immediate interests and the broader interests of transformation.

What this means in the current phase is that these motive forces of change, led by the working class, are required to be managers of a capitalist system. They have to transform elements of a capitalist system in line with objectives of the NDR, while managing the broader economic system in line with the main elements of its own logic.

In other words, these motive forces face the challenge of ensuring that private capital, both local and foreign, appreciates the "capitalist integrity" of the current South African socio-economic arrangement. For instance, they have to manage such issues as stabilising a sharply depreciating currency, preventing and smoothing out volatility in the financial markets, and dealing with complex matters of world commodity markets.

This will certainly include efforts to shift the national and international balance of forces. But it also means, in the immediate sense, engaging with the conjuncture as is, to ensure increased rates of investment by private capital and a growing economy that creates jobs. Thus, to the extent that the



working class is the leader of the NDR, it also has to be the leader of this complex and contradictory endeavour.

This requires a keen sense of the balance of forces, a nimble foot in negotiating tactical detours, creative boldness in communicating decisions and actions both to the broad membership and the public at large, including the markets themselves! This is a challenge facing all the motive forces, led by the working class.

In other words, working class leadership should manifest itself in all spheres of the democratic movement's activities, within and outside of the state. It should express itself throughout the value chain of transformation, from policy formulation to its implementation. It should include the capacity to manage the contradictions that should increasingly play themselves out among the motive forces, as the black middle strata and aspirant bourgeoisie accrue material and other benefits from national democratic transformation.

As the vanguard of the working class, the SACP strives to ensure that this class - including its trade union formations - relates its narrow sectoral interests to broader transformation. This challenge equally faces the ANC, in the context of the NDR. Where challenges of transformation are complex and do not lend themselves to linear progression, the temptation looms large for the political movement to pander to sectoral instincts of given classes or strata.

Minimum programme of the party of the working class and the struggle for socialism ["Musings of an interested observer"]

A number of assumptions are made in the afore-going. These include the fact that the ANC is not a socialist party, and that the Party does not seek to transform the ANC into such a party. It is also assumed that the revolutionary working class movement considers the NDR, as defined by the ANC, as the expression of its minimum programme. It is further assumed that the latter is the case, among others, because the working class took active part in the formulation of the Strategy and Tactics of the NDR.

In the evolution of these positions of the ANC - the minimum programme of the revolutionary working class movement - there was debate and contestation. Such contestation reflected not so much working class positions versus the rest; but it played itself out within and among the motive forces as a whole.

In this regard the central question that faced us in the build-up to 1994, in the immediate aftermath of this period, and even now, is one about a reading of the balance of forces, how to shift this balance, as well as the challenge constantly to widen our revolutionary possibilities. And such is the science and art of revolution that the limits of revolutionary action cannot be weighed precisely on a scale; nor can serious revolutionaries indulge in the recklessness of testing these limits merely to prove a point.

The SACP fights for the realisation of the programme of the ANC - its own minimum programme - not out of opportunism so it could, in time, subvert such a programme. Neither does it posit a "radical NDR" in contrast to what the ANC pursues. Its cadres, and the broad working class take part in, and are at the forefront of, defining this NDR within the ANC. Through force of argument and concrete practice, the revolutionary working class seeks to convince the other motive forces that their long-term interests are served by an NDR that contains a strong social content.

The SACP should therefore negotiate the difficult route to national democracy, with its twists and turns, as would all other revolutionary forces, particularly the ANC. A failure to grasp this can lead to the temptation to fiddle dangerously with the ever-present explosive material for intense class confrontation, in a society such as ours with deep social fissures. It can also lead to a mindset to relate to the fledgling democratic state as the main target of "left" critique and action.

This would in fact represent a failure on the part of the revolutionary working class to exercise leadership within the broader movement for change. It would also be a failure to negotiate the smoothest possible progression to socialism.



But, will there be a fissure among the motive forces, at the stage when the quest for socialism becomes an immediate objective? It is inevitable that there will be constriction in the concentric circles that define the alliance of motive forces. The extent of this should partly be answered by the question, what is socialism?

Socialism is defined by the Party as consisting of multi-party democracy, consistent equality, individual and collective freedom and socialisation of the means and relations of production. While the socialised sector would predominate, with increased democratic rational planning, markets will play an important regulating and distributive function. How does this differ from the broad provisions of the Freedom Charter, the ultimate objective of the NDR as defined by the ANC?

Perhaps in many fundamental ways. But inadequately answered, this vagueness can inform an interpretation to the slogan, Build Socialism Now, to mean, Build Radical National Democracy Now - that is, a radical NDR contrasted with what the ANC 'has created today', in this period of transition! This would then position the revolutionary working class movement as a radical critic of the 'ANC's NDR', 'pure socialists with clean hands' rather than active participants in the complex struggles in all spheres of engagement, including the state. Such an approach would contrast sharply with a confident revolutionary class that leads from the front, maintaining as wide a front of the concentric circles as possible in advancing to socialism.

Yet, if socialism is understood to mean a system qualitatively different from the NDR as broadly defined in the Freedom Charter, the questions still remain: How will the array of motive forces of the NDR reconfigure themselves as conditions for Socialist Revolution mature? How should this find practical expression in day-to-day activities and pronouncements?

From the ranks of the motive forces, the black middle strata and aspirant (as well as actual) bourgeoisie are not only among the most immediate beneficiaries of transformation. Because of their social status, they are also the most articulate and visible in public discourse. Combined with the reality of the overall balance of forces and the challenge to negotiate many detours in this period of transition, there always is a danger that this could have the consequence of blunting the social content of the NDR. As such, both the ANC and the SACP have to address the temptation among these strata to wallow in the self-satisfaction of newly-acquired material gains.

Posed differently, these questions relate to the challenge facing the working class to exercise leadership in the national liberation movement, among others, by seeking to convince most of the motive forces of the NDR that they would, objectively, benefit from democratic socialism. Broadly speaking, creating a broad front that combines forces that recognise the legitimacy of socialism, and passively and actively support it, is the challenge of socialist struggles everywhere.

In lieu of a conclusion

Answers to these difficult questions demand that each component of the Alliance should understand itself, regarding its role and profile in the current period, and how it relates to the other Allies. Open and frank engagement on these issues particularly between the ANC and the SACP, as the political organisations at the head of the revolutionary movement, is critical.

This would also help resolve the problem of an amiable mien in the interaction among the Allies, which often publicly reveals itself as concealing deep-seated misunderstandings. Further, an appreciation of each other's historical role will make it possible to define the division of labour among the allies, given the wide array of forces and issues that we have to deal with in pursuit of the common objective of the NDR.

Organisational questions, including the issue of the public posture of the Allies, is somewhat complicated by the need for each component to have an independent profile. However, a resolution of the issues of substance, some of which are posed in this document, as well as such simple practices as regular consultations based on mutual trust, should minimise unnecessary friction.



Among the many challenges facing the NDR is the management of a transition in which the classes and strata in political office are, strictly speaking, not yet the ruling class. Further, the revolutionary movement has to battle against ideological paradigms and practices that seek to undermine fundamental social change through vicious campaigns and co-option. Yet, as always, the possibilities for qualitative movement forward are open to the revolutionary movement, because its strength derives from the mass of the people who are keenly interested in, and committed to, thorough-going change.

The global situation presents many difficult challenges in the conduct of the NDR. But contained within it is a growing mass movement for a humane, just and equitable world order. The challenge of all democrats is how to mobilise for mutual international solidarity, ensuring at every turn that the struggle for a better life for all, assumes predominance and greater legitimacy in the mainstream of world affairs.

Trade unions and a democratic society

By Gwede Mantashe

What is a trade union?

In any employment relationship a worker is individually weak in relation to his/her partner in the employment contract, the employer. The employer sees a worker as a tool of production, a tool of generating wealth for the owner(s) of the means of production. It is always the employer's intention to extract as much as possible from the worker and pay as little as possible in return. It is this process that generates surplus value. Surplus value is generated through exploitation of workers. Through exploitation, profits are maximised. Greed for more and more profits translates into lower wages and better conditions for employers.

When workers not only understand this situation, but experience it, they begin to look for solutions. A trade union is the key solution to the problem of unequal relations. It is an organisation of wage-earners seeking to unite into a strong force that can effectively engage the employer. At the same time, the union seeks to bring about order in the regulation of employment relations. They create an institutional framework for engagement. In this way, trade unions are an intervention in the inherent contradictions in employment relations.

This informs us of the primary responsibility of any trade union worth its salt, that of representing its members in day-to-day engagement with employers. It must take up the day-to-day bread and butter issues of workers. It is in this ability to make tangible gains for its members that a union retains its membership. This reformist role of the trade unions is the lifeblood of any working class revolution. It is these short-term tangible gains that keep the working class mobilised.

The experience of what unity can achieve is also taken into communities. Trade unionists become experienced activists who play a pivotal role in the mobilisation of communities. This mobilisation, as it is the case in the workplace, is around specific issues that negatively affect community life.

The birth of COSATU

COSATU is a product of worker struggles of the 1970s. This background of unions that fought for recognition of black workers in general and African workers in particular as "EMPLOYEES" gave the "emergent" unions a particular character, one of fighting for the rights of workers. The impact was huge, with the Wiehahn Commission being the highlight.

These unions as organised into CUSA or FOSATU occupied a vacuum that was opened by the banning of the liberation movement and the impact of the ban on SACTU. It is always important to see this re-emergence of the trade union movement as part of the general revival of political activity



and resistance in the country, during the 70s. The students resistance movement and the emergence of the Black Consciousness Movement were pieces of the same initiative.

The unity talks in the early eighties and the One Million Signature campaign that culminated in the formation of the United Democratic Front in 1983 was a consolidation of these efforts. The unity talks culminated in the launch of COSATU in 1985. From its Inaugural Congress, COSATU saw itself as part of the liberation movement. The resolutions of this Inaugural Congress reflect this predominant view. The adoption of the Freedom Charter by COSATU and many of its affiliates in 1987 removed all the doubts on COSATU identifying and seeing itself as part of the Congress movement.

The command by the Commander in Chief of Umkhonto We Sizwe and all progressive forces, comrade Oliver Tambo, of rendering South Africa ungovernable and apartheid unworkable was carried by COSATU and the UDF working very closely. COSATU has always been part of the liberation forces. It is for this reason that COSATU was ready to be part of the revolutionary alliance after the unbanning. COSATU was central in mobilising our people for the final push that culminated in the 1994 breakthrough.

Trade unions in the democratic South Africa

COSATU has a justifiable claim that as part of the movement in its own right and as a member of the Tripartite Alliance, it should be part of taking the National Democratic Revolution forward. Our understanding is that the NDR is about fundamental change. Any transformation programme should be about that fundamental change. It is this claim that causes contradictions.

One of the Alliance partners, the ANC, sees the responsibility to govern as the responsibility of the elected Government. COSATU accepts this but insists that the government should be implementing the programme of the Alliance. The concept of the political centre is based on the desire to involve the Alliance partners in the policy formulation and monitoring implementation.

It is when this political centre cannot hold that contradictions begin to emerge in the workings of the Alliance. In this situation, COSATU reverts into playing its role as part of the broader civil society. It mobilises its constituency; it raises awareness and consciousness. It criticises the weaknesses and shortcomings in the implementation of the transformation programme.

It is this vocal criticism of such shortcomings that is seen as "being oppositionist". It is sometimes described as "narrow sectarian interests". This description of the role of trade unions is confusing on two counts:

- It seeks to redefine the role of trade unions as playing the role of 'LOYALISTS" who are apologetic of their primary role.
- It seeks to relegate workers' needs and interests to being narrow and sectarian.

This is in contrast to how the interests of other interested groups like business are described. Society is organised into interest groups that compete for national resources. Antagonism between the two primary classes, the bourgeoisie and the working class, play themselves out in competition for these scarce resources and the control thereof. Policy formulation is an intervention in these contradictions. The policy framework tampers with the balance of class forces. Organised labour, as the advanced detachment of the working class, must lead the working class struggles. It must lead the working class contest of ideas. A revolutionary working class part must provide the overall working class leadership. The challenge is to translate this theory into practice and thus interpret working class leadership into an earned position.

Conclusion

The general role of trade unions described above, is applicable to all trade unions, including those operating in the public sector. Trade unionism is a phenomenon of capitalism, for only in capitalist societies are there free labour market conditions where the majority of workers are compelled to sell



their labour power to a minority who own the means of production. Management of the relationship with unions determines the content of the relationship. We must spend a lot of energy in this aspect of our relationship. The State should be leading and be the most enlightened in this regard.

Social emancipation and national liberation

By Ngoako Ramthodi

Introduction

It is generally agreed that the fundamental question of the South African Revolution is not what is the difference but what is the relationship between national and social emancipation. While the two are not the same, it is inconceivable, in the case of South Africa, to imagine true national liberation without the deracialisation of property relations. A key element of this must be the redistribution of the wealth of the country to the black majority who are historic victims of apartheid.

Proceeding from the theory of a colonialism of a special type we would argue that, in our case, national liberation is a pre-condition for any social advance and emancipation. Our forebears expressed this same understanding in adopting the "Black Republic" slogan in 1928. In other words, deepening the NDR is equal to opening a direct path to socialism. Therefore the urgent and fundamental task of those aspiring for socialism is to strengthen the NDR and ensure its decisive victory.

This approach remains correct even in the post-1994 qualitative breakthrough, given that the legacy of apartheid and colonialism remains our daily reality. Accordingly, a tendency that bemoans the strengthening of the NDR as delaying the attainment of social emancipation is in practice bordering on an infantile disorder. Indeed, while such a tendency might sound revolutionary, in reality disarms and demobilises the revolutionary forces. In explaining the slogan "Socialism is the future - Build it now", the Party itself makes the same point in arguing for the strengthening of the socialist tendencies within the NDR.

The ANC 1997 Strategy and Tactics correctly captures the historic task when it says "the strategic objective of the NDR is the creation of a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society. This, in essence, means the liberation of Africans in particular and black people in general from political and economic bondage. It means uplifting the quality of life of all South Africans, the majority of whom are African and female." From this strategic objective flow many strategic tasks which the last National General Council identified.

The fulfillment of revolutionary tasks requires a programme of action owned and led by the Alliance. The very nature of the strategic objective and tasks demands the maximum mobilisation of all revolutionary and progressive forces around this programme of action. The working class would play a leading role in implementing such programme - in doing so it would also be acting in the interests of other class forces, constituting the motive forces, and thereby win their respect and loyalty.

The ANC National General Council clearly identifies these motive forces as "the African majority and blacks in general and in class terms include the unemployed and landless rural masses; unskilled and semi-skilled workers, professionals, entrepreneurs and small business operators." This also includes black women. In our context, the black bourgeoisie would, broadly speaking, form part of the forces for change.

Leadership of Tripartite Alliance

The ANC has always assumed the leadership of the Alliance and it has shown itself more than capable of discharging this historic mission. In the context of a Colonialism of Special Type, this leadership of the ANC is pre-ordained as the most suitable organisational form to lead non-racial and



multi-class motive forces of our revolution. Other organisational forms would not be suitable for this role under our current conditions. This is the reason why over the decades the entire Alliance have solidly rallied behind the ANC leadership.

In playing out this leadership, the ANC has an obligation and duty to remain a political home for all with a clear bias towards the working class. Again this does not depend on the wishes of individual leaders at any given time. This duty arises out of the reality that the overwhelming majority of the victims of apartheid and colonialism are black people who have been dispossessed under colonialism.

Therefore, in prosecuting the struggle, the ANC must be seen to reflect the objective interests of these motive forces.

Experience has shown that a weaker ANC means a weaker working class, in the same way as a weaker working class means a weaker ANC. In the underground there was both organisational and political cohesion within the Alliance. At an organisational level all members of the Party and SACTU were also members of the ANC. Within the ANC these members of the working class never behaved like a cabal. They participated in all political programmes as would any other ANC member. When they emerged in leadership positions it was on account of their high levels of political maturity and discipline rather than as a result of conspiracy within the Party.

This point is crucial for the smooth functioning of the Alliance. Members of the Party in the ANC should be as true members of the ANC as they are true members of the Party. This is correct because we have always understood that the national liberation struggle is not just the form of expression of the socialist struggle, but it has itself its own momentum and specific historical tasks to perform.

Historically what has bound the Alliance together was the revolutionary mission of liberating black people in general and Africans in particular. The majority of these are members of the working class, the rural poor and women. The unity of purpose of the Alliance thus arose out of the unity of needs. Whatever tensions might have arisen would not be on the fundamentals, but rather on tactics.

In terms of our strategy and tactics the strategic objective of the NDR has not changed. We, therefore argue that what binds the Alliance together remains the fundamental objective of liberating black people in general and Africans in particular. However, as we engage in daily and practical struggles different class forces will place emphasis on their core interests within an overarching national question. This means that the working class should assert its leadership role by incorporating into its programmes the true aspirations of other sections of the motive forces, including the interests of the emerging black bourgeoisie.

A strategy which promotes the interests of organised labour to the exclusion of other elements of the motive forces would result in the isolation of the working class. Similarly an approach which suggests that the working class should support the national struggle without simultaneously advancing its own interests would be counter-revolutionary. In this context, the working class should not aim for quick and easy victories in the same way as it should not fail to consolidate on the battles already won.

The correct approach is to prosecute the struggle in a way that the primacy of the national struggle is maintained whilst at the same time its social dimension is deepened. Major historic breakthroughs such as 1994 are likely to destabilise this balance, at least, for the time being. The result may be the sort of tensions we have experienced in recent times. We should therefore accept that to some extent these tensions are inevitable, given the massive changes in the terrain of struggle.

This brings to the fore the question as to how the ANC and the Alliance should relate to the democratic state. A point should be made that the so called democratic state is itself still being democratised. That is why one of our fundamentals tasks is the transformation of the state. Following the Mafikeng National Conference, the ANC shifted the focus of policy formulation from the state back to Luthuli House. At least that is what our resolutions were. In other words the state had to be used as the additional weapon in the armoury of revolutionary forces. It was not envisaged that the state



would be used as the only weapon. The ANC should therefore have available at its disposal the masses of our people in prosecuting the struggle. At times this might mean controlled activities aimed at transforming the state. This might appear to be a contradiction. However, the simple analogy out of the puzzle is that of a hunter who sharpens the knife so that it can be sharper - he is not destroying the knife by sharpening it.

The unbanning of the Alliance and the transformation of the Party into a mass party are part of the new conditions demanding revolutionary solutions from us. This has brought about one of the most fascinating and extremely complex dimensions to our struggle.

The Role of COSATU

At the outset a point should be made that a trade union is not a political party. Its primary role is to protect and to advance the interests of its own members, namely workers, in their place of employment. Historically, our struggle has attracted unions into active political struggles under the leadership of both the ANC and the Party. It is therefore no accident that leading trade unionists also held senior positions both in the Party and in the ANC. This relationship played a major role in raising the consciousness of the working class in our country. COSATU is a proud successor to the struggles of earlier foundations, especially SACTU, which, in spite of limitations specific to unions, was able to play a pivotal role in the national liberation struggle.

The interesting lesson we have learned in our own struggle is that a trade union movement has been forced not to limit its struggles to the shop floor. Our experience is that of combining economic and political struggles on the shop floor. This begins to explain why COSATU remains part of the Alliance post-1994. It may also explain why COSATU may be increasingly becoming vocal on political issues, even though it publicly subordinates itself to the vanguardship of the Party and the leadership of the ANC.

We do not think it would be correct to suggest the depoliticisation of COSATU on the basis that the trade union is not a political Party. What is required is for the ANC and the Party to intensify political work amongst the COSATU membership. COSATU members would then be conscientised to see their own work situation in the context of the broader struggle as led by the ANC.

On the other hand, we must accelerate the state transformation to further consolidate the gains already made since 1994. Our senior managers in the Public Service need political training in the ethos of a democratic state. This would go a long way in mitigating the natural tension associated with shop floor contradictions. Perhaps much more fundamentally, the political management of the state should be based on a programme owned by the whole Alliance. This may seem difficult, but it is achievable with a bit of honesty and hard work.

In agreeing to this common programme, we should not seek to take away, the ability of COSATU to engage in legitimate strike actions. In such an eventuality they would cease to be a trade union movement. However differentiation between shop floor issues and political issues is being suggested. With regard to political issues mass action should be an Alliance driven process. Better still if such action is ANC led.

It is mainly the task of the ANC and the Party as the highest organisational and ideological expression of the working class to consistently provide leadership. The trade union movement on its own, because of its very nature, cannot grasp this fact.

In this context it cannot be over-emphasized that our revolution will best be served by a strong and independent COSATU, capable of defending the interests of its own members. Such a COSATU would also, in line with the demands of the NDR, understand and support the programmes of the Alliance as led by the ANC. This political consciousness cannot be left to the leadership alone. To that end the alliance has a responsibility to intensify political work among the working people. This understanding would by and large define COSATU's relationship with the democratic state.



An independent and credible COSATU which shares the Alliance agenda and strategy and tactics for transformation is an indispensable part of the future. It is correct that this independence should not express itself in the form of a "permanent opposition" to the state. Similarly, we cannot view each and every mass action as being necessarily negative.

The Role of the SACP

In 1848, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, in the Manifesto of the Communist Party, explained their view of the role of the Communist Party vis-a-vis the entire working class and the advantage of the Party over the working class as a whole. They explained the importance of the Party remaining part of the working class while at the same time being ahead of it as its vanguard.

"The Communists, therefore, are on the one hand, practically, the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country, that section that pushes forward all others; on the one hand, theoretically, they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement." É "They (Communists) do not set up any sectarian principles of their own, by which to shape and mould the proletarian movement."

It is enough that the working class is mobilised in such a way that it understands its leading role in the revolutionary transformation of society. It must pronounce itself and act in such a way that other social forces objectively gaining from social transformation accept its leading role because their own interests are taken care of by the working class led by the Party.

The Party, as the highest form of organisation of the working class must represent the all-embracing interests of the working class as a whole and not just the interests of the organised section of the working class but those of the organised and unorganised; the employed and non-employed sections of the working class. Short of this, it will sink to Economism and Narodism and lose its leadership role. It will turn itself into a trade union movement which is to take two steps backward.

The strategic task of the SACP is the mobilisation of the genuine left democratic forces. It is to ensure that all progressive (potential or actual) forces coalesce and unite in action to consolidate the NDR without diluting the leadership role of the working class. It is to train and guide the progressive trade union movement through its theoretical superiority. As to whether the SACP is fulfilling this task needs honest critical self-examination.

In recent times we have witnessed public disagreements within the Alliance. These are partly a reflection of the autonomy of Alliance partners. In some of its documents the Party argues that, Ówe cannot, without doing immense damage to the ANC and its influence, suppress the reality of multiple mandates - we need, however, especially among allied formations, to find ways to effectively manage this multiplicity.

In this context we are of the view that over-emphasis of multiple mandates may at times lead to precisely the eventuality that the Party fears, namely, "doing immense damage to the ANC and its influence". Historically the Alliance has resolved this particular issue through internal dialogue and debates. There is no reason why we should not encourage and work towards this dialogue. Multiple mandates will best be resolved internally.

Through the eye of a needle?

Choosing the best cadres to lead transformation



A National Working Committee discussion document

Why should we discuss this issue?

1. As a movement for fundamental change, the ANC regularly has to elect leaders at various levels who are equal to the challenge of each phase of struggle. Such leaders should represent the motive forces of the struggle. To become an ANC leader is not an entitlement. It should not be an easy process attached merely to status. It should be informed first and foremost by the desire and commitment to serve the people, and a track record appreciated by ANC members and communities alike.

2 Those in leadership positions should unite and guide the movement to be at the head of the process of change. They should lead the movement in its mission to organise and inspire the masses to be their own liberators. They should lead the task of governance with diligence. And, together, they should reflect continuity of a revolutionary tradition and renewal which sustains the movement in the long-term.

3 How do thousands of branches throughout the country ensure that this happens in actual practice? How do we deal with individual ambition, lobbying, promotion of friends and pursuit of selfish interests? How do we ensure that electoral processes do not tear the movement apart? How do we prevent attempts to use the movement as a step-ladder towards self-enrichment?

4 Besides, the door can be left open for corrupt individuals and even enemies of change, to exploit the movement's internal democracy to sabotage the struggle and create their own ANC. Further, those who fail in positions of authority can use all kinds of excuses to cling to power, when the time for change has come.

5 These are difficult questions. But the movement's membership has to find the answers, so we together build and sustain the ANC as an agent for change. To fully understand this challenge, let us first examine the character of challenges in this phase of struggle.

What are the challenges we face at this stage?

6 According to the Strategy and Tactics document:

"Our strategy is the creation of a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society. In pursuit of this objective, we shall, at each given moment, creatively adopt tactics that advance that objective. Our fundamental point of departure is that South Africans have it in their power, as a people and as part of progressive humankind, to continually change the environment in which we operate in the interest of a better future.

"In this phase of transformation, we seek to expand and deepen the power of democratic forces in all centres critical to the NDR, at the same time as we improve the people's quality of life. Our efforts, which are people-centred, people-driven and gender-sensitive, are founded on five basic pillars:

- to build and strengthen the ANC as a movement that organises and leads the people in the task of social transformation;
- to deepen our democracy and culture of human rights and mobilise the people to take active part in changing their lives for the better;
- to strengthen the hold of the democratic movement on state power, and transform the state machinery to serve the cause of social change;
- to pursue economic growth, development and redistribution in such a way as to improve the people's quality of life; and
- to work with progressive forces throughout the world to promote and defend our transformation, advance Africa's renaissance and build a new world order."

7 Among the priorities that need immediate attention are: building active branches that give leadership to communities; strengthening the Tri-partite Alliance; ensuring that the ANC leads mass organisations; and making decisive interventions in the ideological struggle.

8 At the level of government, we need to improve the capacity of the state to meet its obligation to citizens in the area of economic growth and job creation, social programmes, and dealing with crime and corruption. Further, the ANC, both inside and outside government, should play a leading role in Africa's renewal and building a better world.

9 As we carry out these tasks, we will face a concerted campaign to undermine our efforts, by those who oppose change. They will underplay the progress we are making, while exaggerating weaknesses. They will seek to discredit the ANC and its leadership. They will also try to undermine confidence in the institutions of democracy we have set up.

10 Some will even try to subvert the ANC from within. Because they know they cannot defeat the ANC frontally, they will try to create an ANC that serves their interests.

What kind of ANC is required to meet these challenges?

11 A revolutionary democratic movement: The ANC pursues fundamental change to create a better life for all. Equality among all South Africans in choosing a government of their choice, using the country's resources to improve conditions of especially the poor, and removing racism in the ownership and distribution of wealth are among our core principles. Within its ranks, the ANC ensures the participation of members in shaping the movement's policies and programmes.

12 A non-racial national movement: It is critical that our struggle brings about an end to apartheid relations in all areas of life. The ANC believes in the equal worth of all human beings. We seek to unite South Africans across racial and ethnic differences, taking into account the central role of Blacks in general and Africans in particular, given their exclusion under apartheid. We practice these principles within the organisation.

13 A broad national democratic movement: The ANC represents the mass of forces that pursue social transformation. Individuals belonging to different classes and strata form part of these forces, because they stand to gain from fundamental change. However, the ANC is keenly aware of the social basis of apartheid. It recognises the leading role of the working class and pays special attention to the poor.

14 A mass movement: The ANC seeks to bring into its ranks as many South Africans as possible who accept its principles and policies. As a legal organisation, it does not target only particular advanced political activists for recruitment. As long as one accepts its policies and takes its oath, anyone can become a member.

15 A non-sexist movement: Over time, the ANC has embraced the principle of gender equality as one of the central features of national liberation. This is reinforced through the equitable representation of women at all levels of the movement, and it requires the conscious implementation of affirmative action within our ranks.

16 A leader of the democratic forces: Because of what it stands for, and its track record in the fight against apartheid colonialism, the ANC emerged as the leader of the forces who pursue a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa. It seeks to unite all these forces and their organisations into a movement for fundamental change. Its leaders and members should win the confidence of organisations of the people.

17 A champion of progressive internationalism: The ANC's objectives are informed by the aspirations of the people of SA, Africa and millions others in all parts of the world. Over the years, it has contributed to, and benefited from, struggles across the globe for a just, equitable and humane world order; and it remains committed to these ideals.



What informs the principles of ANC Organisational Democracy?

18 Elected leadership: Leadership of the ANC is elected in conferences or, at branch level, in general members meetings. In all these instances, it is the individual members of the ANC, directly at branch level, or through their delegates, at other levels, who decide on the composition of the leadership structures.

19 Collective leadership: Individual leaders are elected into collectives which should work as a unit, fulfilling their mandate as dictated to by the constitution. No single person is a leader unto himself or herself, but a member of a collective which should give considered, canvassed guidance to the membership and society as a whole.

20 Branches as basic units: The branch is the basic and most important unit of the ANC. This is where members give leadership to communities, where they bring programmes to life and where they consider and make proposals on policies of the movement.

21 Consultations and mandates: Regular meetings of branches, regions and provinces, as well as national conferences provide the membership with the platform to assume collective ownership of the movement's fate. They set out the mandate that guides the leadership, and are important fora for report-backs and consultations across the movement.

22 Criticism and self-criticism: It is to be expected that in leading social activity, leaders and members will from time to time make mistakes. The most important thing is that these individuals and collectives should have the capacity and humility to honestly review their work critically, and correct the weaknesses.

23 Democracy as majority rule: Individual members and leaders will have differing opinions on how particular issues should be addressed. The strength of revolutionary organisation lies among others in the ability to synthesise these views and emerge with the wisest possible approach. Once a decision has been taken on the basis of the majority's views, it binds everyone, including those who held a contrary view.

24 Status of higher and lower structures: Lower structures have the right to influence decisions of higher structures. And, within their mandate the higher structures have a responsibility to take decisions. Once these decisions have been taken, they bind all the relevant lower structures: they have to be supported and implemented.

What are the constitutional guidelines for elections?

25 Every member of the ANC has the right to vote for, and be elected into, leadership positions. Like all rights, this goes along with the obligation to understand and pursue the objectives of the ANC. Further, in order to ensure that leaders are elected for their track record in serving the people, qualifications apply in relation to leadership positions: to be on the BEC a member should have been in the ANC for at least a year; for the REC it's 2 years; 3 years for the PEC and for the NEC it's 5 years.

26 In the conferences or AGM's where leaders are elected, this happens after discussion on the political and organisational environment and challenges facing the ANC. Out of these discussions emerges the political programme for the next term of office. Broadly, it is on the basis of these discussions (which start before the relevant conferences) that an appropriate leadership collective is decided upon.

27 Branch members are the electoral college for all elective positions. At branch level, this happens at an AGM where all members take part. In regional, provincial and national conferences, the delegates are mandated by the branch membership. However, each delegate has the right and latitude to influence and be influenced by delegates from other branches.



28 Because of the central role of branches and their delegates in these processes, two critical challenges face all branches. Firstly, we must all the time ensure the integrity of the membership system, so that only genuine, bona fide members of the ANC exercise this important responsibility of deciding on policy and leadership. Secondly, where branch members delegate individuals to represent them, they must ensure that these are members capable of influencing others, and at the same time, able to weigh various arguments and acting in the best interest of the movement.

29 Delegates from branches elect Regional Executive Committees. For purposes of Provincial Executives, nominations from branches are canvassed at Regional Conferences, for regions to reach broad consensus. For purposes of National Conferences the same process also happens at Provincial Conferences.

30 This allows branches to share ideas, information and knowledge around various candidates. Through all these levels, a broad mandate is given to delegates: but each delegate has the responsibility to weigh views even at Conference itself and take decisions that, in his or her assessment, serve the best interests of the struggle.

31 At Conferences, nominations are also allowed from the floor, from individual delegates. Relevant minimums of support are set for the nominees to be included in the lists. This allows for individual delegates, regions or provinces to put forward names of those they deem capable but could not emerge through the nomination process.

32 Voting at Conferences is by secret ballot, and each delegate has one vote of equal value. In other words, delegates are not voting fodder, mechanically and unthinkingly bound to lists and subject to the whip. While delegates should be guided by the broad mandate of their branches, regions or provinces, each individual delegate is expected to exercise his or her judgement on the basis of his or her assessment of the movement's interests.

What then are the broad requirements of leadership?

33 As a revolutionary organisation, the ANC needs revolutionary cadres and leaders. It should put in place leadership collectives that satisfy the character of the ANC defined above: a revolutionary democratic movement, a non-racial and non-sexist national movement, a broad national democratic movement, a mass movement and a leader of the democratic forces.

34 An ANC leader should understand ANC policy and be able to apply it under all conditions in which she finds herself. This includes an appreciation, from the NDR stand-point, of the country and the world we live in, of the balance of forces, and of how continually to change this balance in favour of the motive forces of change.

35 A leader should constantly seek to improve his capacity to serve the people; he should strive to be in touch with the people all the time, listen to their views and learn from them. He should be accessible and flexible; and not arrogate to himself the status of being the source of all wisdom.

36 A leader should win the confidence of the people in her day-to-day work. Where the situation demands, she should be firm; and have the courage to explain and seek to convince others of the correctness of decisions taken by constitutional structures even if such decisions are unpopular. She should not seek to gain cheap popularity by avoiding difficult issues, making false promises or merely pandering to popular sentiment.

37 A leader should lead by example. He should be above reproach in his political and social conduct - as defined by our revolutionary morality. Through force of example, he should act as a role model to ANC members and non-members alike. Leading a life that reflects commitment to the strategic goals of the NDR includes not only being free of corrupt practices; it also means actively fighting against corruption.



38 There are no ready-made leaders. Leaders evolve out of battles for social transformation. In these battles, cadres will stumble and some will fall. But the abiding quality of leadership is to learn from mistakes, to appreciate one's weaknesses and correct them.

39 A leader should seek to influence and to be influenced by others in the collective. He should have the conviction to state his views boldly and openly within constitutional structures of the movement; and - without being disrespectful - not to cower before those in more senior positions in pursuit of patronage, nor to rely on cliques to maintain one's position.

40 An individual with qualities of leadership does not seek to gain popularity by undermining those in positions of responsibility. Where such a member has a view on how to improve things or correct mistakes, she should state those views in constitutional structures and seek to win others to her own thinking. She should assist the movement as a whole to improve its work, and not stand aside to claim perfection out of inactivity.

41 The struggle for social transformation is a complex undertaking in which at times, personal interests will conflict with the organisational interest. From time to time, conflict will manifest itself between and among members and leaders. The ultimate test of leadership includes:

41.1 striving for convergence between personal interests - material, status and otherwise - and the collective interest;

41.2 handling conflict in the course of ANC work by understanding its true origins and seeking to resolve it in the context of struggle and in the interest of the ANC;

41.3 the ability to inspire people in good times and bad; to reinforce members' and society's confidence in the ANC and transformation; and

41.4 winning genuine acceptance by the membership, not through suppression, threats or patronage, but by being principled, firm, humble and considerate.

How has the base of leadership widened in the past few years?

42 With its unbanning, the ANC set out to build a mass movement, drawing members from the mass of the South African people. This also made it possible to introduce profound open democratic practices, with activists of the anti-apartheid struggle and communities in general taking part in building their movement. A culture of open mass participation helped root the ANC in all areas of the country. It improved its standing as a people's movement both in terms of its policies and programmes and in its mass composition.

43 As it developed from being a movement of cadres thoroughly processed and systematically educated in its policies, it attracted huge numbers of people many of whom developed in its ranks. Many of them were prepared to face the might of state-sponsored violence for 'the last push'. However, some individuals may have joined for the prestige associated with the changes happening at the beginning of the decade; as well as the personal opportunities that would arise when the ANC came into government.

44 Over these years, young people, women, community leaders of various hues, veterans of previous struggles, professionals and business-people found political home in the movement as it emerged from the underground. Cadres from prison, exile, underground formations and the mass movement have come together at various levels of leadership. All this has brought a dynamic political chemistry into the evolution of the organisation. It has also provided a wide and deep pool of experience within leadership.

45 In this period, and especially with the achievement of democracy, the ANC had to put together teams at various levels to develop and implement policies of a democratic governance. Without much formal training, these cadres have over the years acquitted themselves well in defining the



constitutional framework, developing and implementing legislation and programmes for transformation, and building a state with the capacity to serve the people.

46 The Youth and Women's Leagues have also served as critical schools of the revolution and a source of cadres who are continually assuming leadership positions within the ANC. So have many other formations allied to the movement, including COSATU, the revolutionary student movement, civic associations, religious structures, the women's movement and some professional bodies. Further, it should be emphasised that, even if they may not be elected as a formal part of ANC leadership structures, leaders of these mass formations who are members of the ANC are also, in their own right, ANC leaders.

What are the negatives challenges that have emerged in the new terrain?

47 Entry into government meant that a great many cadres of the movement moved en masse from full-time organisational work. This was a necessary shift arising from the victories we had scored. However, this was not done in a planned manner. As a result, for the first few years, there were virtually no senior leaders of the ANC based at its headquarters. This had a negative impact on the task of mass organisation. While progress has been made in this regard, further work needs to be done to ensure that ANC structures operate as an organisational and political centre for everything the ANC does.

48 Because leadership in structures of the ANC affords opportunities to assume positions of authority in government, some individuals then compete for ANC leadership positions in order to get into government. Many such members view positions in government as a source of material riches for themselves. Thus resources, prestige and authority of government positions become the driving force in competition for leadership positions in the ANC.

49 Government positions also go hand-in-hand with the possibility to issue contracts to commercial companies. Some of these companies identify ANC members that they can promote in ANC structures and into government, so that they can get contracts by hook or by crook. This is done through media networks to discredit other leaders, or even by buying membership cards to set up branches that are ANC only in name.

50 Positions in government also mean the possibility to appoint individuals in all kinds of capacities. As such, some members make promises to friends, that once elected and ensconced in government, they would return the favour. Cliques and factions then emerge within the movement, around personal loyalties driven by corrupt intentions. Members become voting fodder to serve individuals' self-interest.

51 Media focus on government and the ANC as a ruling party also means that individuals appointed into various positions are able to acquire a public profile in the course of their work. As such, over time, they become the visible members who would get nominated for leadership positions. This is a natural expression of confidence and helps to widen the base from which leaders are elected. However, where such practice becomes the main and only criterion, hard-working individuals who do not enjoy such profile get overlooked.

52 Influenced by a culture alien to the ANC, a tendency has also developed to assess individuals totally outside of the political context which is the core mandate of the ANC. Artificial criteria such as acceptability to the media, eloquence specifically in English, and warped notions of "sophistication" are then imposed on the movement's approach.

53 Further, false categories of "left" and "right", pro-this and anti-the-other, "insider" and "outsider" are introduced by so-called analysts with little, if any, understanding of the movement's policies, programmes and culture. These are then accepted by some of our members. This is usually whispered outside formal structures, and bandied about opportunistically in the build-up to the organisation's conferences.



54 The process of social transformation is a difficult one, with possibilities of committing mistakes from time to time and with the speed of change not totally dependent on our will. Some individuals exploit these weaknesses by creating an impression that they could do what the ANC leadership as a whole is unable to do. Thus is born populism.

55 Related to the above is the danger arising out of the fact that executive positions in government are by appointment. This can have the effect of stifling frank, honest and self-critical debate within the ranks of the movement. This is because some individuals may convince themselves that, by pretending to be what they are not, and being seen to agree with those in authority all the time, they would then be rewarded with appointment into senior government positions.

56 On the other hand, others seek to court popularity by demonstrating "independence" from constitutional structures and senior leaders of the ANC, for its own sake. Often, this is encouraged by some media and other forces opposed to the ANC, precisely because it means independence from the mission and discipline of the movement.

57 The tendency is also developing for discussion around leadership nominations to be reduced to mechanical deal-making among branches, regions and provinces. Thus, instead of having thorough and honest discussion about the qualities of nominees, delegates negotiate merely on the basis of, "if you take ours, we'll take yours". This may assist in ensuring provincial and regional balances. But, taken to extremes, it can result in federalism by stealth within the movement.

How do members take charge?

58 The selection and election of leaders should reside firmly in the hands of the membership. This can only happen if there is open and frank discussion on these issues in formal structures of the movement. Quiet and secret lobbying opens the movement to opportunism and even infiltration by forces hostile to the ANC's objectives.

59 Such discussion should be informed by the critical policy and programmatic issues that face us in each phase of struggle. To recapitulate, this stage can be characterised as one of a continuing transition and the beginnings of faster transformation. It is a stage at which we are faced with the challenge of mobilising the people to ensure that they take part in improving their lives for the better. We are also faced with the task of decisively contributing to the mobilisation of Africa and the world for focussed attention on the needs of Africa and the poor across the globe.

60 In debating the composition of leadership collectives, we should take into account such factors as the various historical experiences of movement cadres. We also have to ensure that sufficient skills are harnessed for the task of governance. The contribution of veterans of the struggle in leadership structures at various levels is also a critical element to ensure continuity and the wisdom of experience.

61 In a modernising world, and to sustain the movement in the long-term, we should systematically and consciously take more and more young people into the blast furnace of leadership responsibility. We should, broadly, also ensure race, gender and geographic balances, without reducing this to bean-counting and hair-splitting. And a correct balance must be struck between leaders in government and those in ANC and other mass formations outside government.

62 How do members come to know of cadres with such qualities beyond those who are already in public office? The overriding requirement is that members should inform themselves of developments in their locality, in the regions, the province and at national level. In selecting cadres for branch and perhaps regional leadership, this should be much easier. Other levels will require exchange of views in inter-regional and inter-provincial meetings.

63 But it also means that leadership structures should help give guidance -be they structures of the ANC itself, or the Women and Youth Leagues. Further, the manner in which deployment is carried out should expose cadres with potential to the widest possible base of membership. .



How 'natural' is the selection process?

64 How then does selection of candidates happen? Is it a "natural" process where leaders emerge out of some mysterious selection, or is it a conscious act on the part of members? Should members canvass for those they support and/or should individuals promote themselves? Is there a place for lobbying in the ANC?

65 To answer these questions, let us go back to the basics. In the first instance, the ANC constitution asserts the right for individuals to stand for and be elected into formal positions of responsibility. But waving a constitution does not excuse unbecoming conduct. Thus, we need to understand and follow the constitution; but also to learn from the movement's culture while adapting that culture to current realities.

66 Members are not discouraged from canvassing for those they support. And, technically, an individual is not prohibited from canvassing for him-/herself. But it is a matter of profound cultural practice within the ANC that individuals do not promote or canvass for themselves. Historically, this has justifiably been frowned upon as being in bad revolutionary taste. One of the main reasons for this is that when cadres of the movement do their work, this is not meant to be with an eye on leadership positions or some other personal reward; but to serve the people. When cadres are not in formal leadership positions, they should not will others to fail, but assist everyone in the interest of fundamental change.

67 Selecting candidates and ultimately electing leaders is not like the "natural selection" of evolution where things develop by chance. It must be a conscious and well-considered act on the part of each ANC member. But how should this be done? What issues should you, the member, take into account when the nomination and election process unfolds?

68 Nominations take place at constitutional structures such as branch AGM's and regional, provincial and national conferences. Individual members nominate their candidates at these meetings on the basis of an assessment of candidates' qualities and performance. However, declaration of support for a person, or of a willingness to stand, does not guarantee that one would be a candidate. You become a candidate after the proposal has been accepted by a branch or any other relevant constitutional structure.

69 Nomination and canvassing must be done openly, and within constitutional structures of the movement. If a member wishes to nominate a candidate or to stand for a particular position, s/he must indicate this in formal structures such as branch meetings. Outside these structures, it becomes dangerous and unacceptable lobbying.

70 In open engagement within constitutional structures, the member(s) would then motivate why they believe that a particular person would make a significant contribution to the work of the ANC at the various levels. They would also be able to indicate the new and creative things that nominees would bring to leadership collectives. If the nominees have been members of these or other collectives, it should also be shown that they have striven to improve the work of these collectives, raised issues openly and had the courage of their convictions. It does not help for individuals to keep quiet in formal structures and emerge as surprise leaders with the promise to perform better.

71 If they believe that there are weaknesses to correct, those who nominate or wish to stand should be able to show that those weaknesses are real and not the imagination of the media or forces which want to weaken the ANC. They should also show that the weaknesses are those of individuals they seek to replace, and not a result of the objective situation in which the movement finds itself. This would help contain a litany of false promises.

72 It is also critical that individuals whose names are advanced reflect consistency in their work to pursue the ANC's interests. Individuals who target positions of influence and leave when they lose; and then seek to come back only as leaders would have to show how this serves the interests of the movement, and whether they can be relied upon during difficult times.



73 Inasmuch as we should avoid pretenders and opportunists, we should also ensure that leadership structures do not carry deadwood. If they are already serving in these structures, or have served in the past, leaders should be assessed on how their presence helped the movement in its work. Further, it should be clear how their presence in these structures would help ensure the balances that are required for the movement to fulfil its mission.

74 Individuals who operate in the dead of the night, convening secret meetings and speaking poorly of other members should be exposed and isolated. When approached to be part of such groups, members should relay such information to relevant structures or individuals in whom they have confidence. But it is also critical that proper investigations are conducted, and those accused are informed. Witch-hunts should be avoided as a matter of principle.

75 There is nothing inherently wrong with structures developing lists of candidates and canvassing for them. However, such lists should not be used to stifle discussion in branch and other constitutional forums, and prevent the nomination of other candidates. In discussions around nominees, names on the lists should not take precedence over any other nominations from members. At the conferences, delegates should be guided by lists developed by their branches, regions and provinces through democratic processes. But they are not bound to follow each and every name. Being influenced by delegates from other areas and choosing differently is not an offence.

Through the eye of a needle?

76 These guidelines indicate the broad parameters within which every member of the ANC should exercise his/her right to shape the leadership collectives of the movement and ensure that it meets its historical mandate. In one sense they make it difficult for individuals to ascend to positions of leadership in the organisation.

77 In applying these broad principles, members need to be firm. But we should also exercise creative flexibility, knowing that no single individual is perfect. Indeed there are many who may have potential but would not meet all the requirements set out here. But it is critical that they are honest about their capacity, and show a willingness to learn.

78 There are many members of the ANC who enjoy great respect within their communities, but still have to grasp the complex matters of policy. Such individuals should be encouraged to avail themselves for leadership positions. They should however be prepared to develop themselves and to take part in relevant training sessions.

79 It is a matter of principle, revolutionary democratic practice, and a constitutional requirement that, once duly elected, the leaders should be accepted by all members as leaders of the movement as a whole at the relevant level. They should be assisted by all of us in their work. The leaders themselves are obliged to serve, and to listen to, all members, including those who may not have voted for them.

80 The most important message of these guidelines is that you, the member, should be empowered to take an active and informed part in choosing leadership at various levels; or to stand for any position for which you believe you are suitable.

81 So, it may not exactly be through the eye of a needle. But we should strive all the time to ensure that our leaders are indeed made of sterner revolutionary stuff.

Umrabulo Series on Building the South African Women's Movement

Part 2: Towards a movement for transformation of gender relations and the achievement of gender equality



By Thenjiwe Mtintso

Introduction

This paper is the continuing conversation begun in Umrabulo 10, exploring matters related to the challenges facing South Africans in the struggle for gender equality. It tries to raise questions about what is glibly called the Women's Movement.

An argument is made for a focus on a broad movement for the transformation of gender relations that will embrace different kinds of women's movements, involve both women and men operating as an integral part of the broader movement for transformation in South Africa.

It is further argued that the struggle for gender equality has always been part and parcel, though not a by-product, of the struggle for national liberation in South Africa. Women's organisations and the women's movement have also been an essential part, but not subordinates of the broader national liberation movement.

The Mass Movement pre-1994

The women's movement, like all social movements, goes through high waves and ebbs defined by the changing moments in history. It, like the social movement that it is part of, expresses concerns, aspirations and needs of different sectors of women in society. It is therefore not an expression of a homogenous group of women with universal interests.

In South Africa there have always been strong women's movements (not one) expressing the different aspirations of women defined by amongst others, their class, race and geographic location. These did not always act as one movement primarily because of their immediate needs and primary demands, different forms of organisations and different methods of organising and struggles.

However, prior to 1994 and particularly in the 80s there was a convergence of aspirations - the defeat of apartheid and creation of a democratic, non-sexist South Africa. The 80s were a period of heightened mass mobilisation and mass activism with different organisations springing up, engaging in different sectors, but united under what became known as the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM), a massive movement for the overthrow of apartheid. At the centre of this mass activism and MDM was the women's activism expressed in different organisations and engaging a range of issues, emerging as a coherent and cohesive movement through united action. There was indeed no issue that did not warrant collective action from organised women. Our streets were battlegrounds for women and mass struggles. These women's actions were not in isolation from the general mass struggles but while they were integrated within these, there was also a specialised focus on women's struggles particularly around gender related demands. These were led by a variety of organisations - ranging from women's groups demanding access to services through to feminist kinds of organisations addressing both matters of access to basic services for women and qualitative changes in power relations between women and men in society.

While there were no universal women's interests, there was some kind of "sisterhood" experienced through united action across class, race and any other divides. The political context and environment created conditions for a coherent and cohesive movement mainly amongst the progressive forces though expressed in different organisations.

The changed and changing landscape

The 90s ushered in a new era in our history - exciting and complex. Many organisations in the MDM were dissolved and incorporated within the ANC. The Congress inclined women's organisations were integrated into the ANCWL. Whether or not this was the best route to take at the time is a topic for another discussion.



What is clear is that not enough analysis and preparation was done for this process if the Port Elizabeth tension-filled women's conference is anything to go by. Perhaps because of the challenges of the time, insufficient evaluation was done about the implications of the dissolution of so many organisations, the state of the women's movement and the challenges that would face it in the new context. There may also have been less exploration of the capacity and limitations of a politically defined and aligned organisation like the ANCWL to play the role of an all embracing women's organisation mobilising even beyond the traditional ANC base.

With the luxury of hindsight and the urgency to learn from the past, we may ask if we did not overestimate the gender consciousness of both women and men in the national liberation movement that would enable them to understand the dynamics of patriarchy and how to fight against it in the absence of some of these organised women's formations. But the critical role played by the ANCWL as well as its vision in the formation of the WNC helped in the mobilisation and articulation of the women's interests in the transition to democracy. The disbanding of organisations did not lead to demobilisation of gender activism. Umramulo 10 has adequately dealt with the transition period and the prevailing conditions.

The contradictions of the shift from mass mobilisation against a repressive regime to building a new democratic State and society brings its own challenges and even threats. The State is an important instrument for transforming power relations in society including gender relations, but is also patriarchal and needs to be transformed. Patriarchy - the system and ideology of the domination of women by men - permeates all spheres of life and is extremely resilient particularly because of its character and manifestations.

The revolutionary gains since 1994

Different reports from within and outside government have catalogued the revolutionary gains made since 1994 in relation to changing the lives of South Africans the majority of whom are black and are women. This paper will not attempt to trace all these. Suffice it is to mention:-

- Constitutional - Clause 9 of the Constitution in the Bill of Rights guarantees equal rights for all South Africans, elaborates on all of these and makes guarantees for legislative measures for promotion and protection of these. It also stipulates that neither the state nor any individual can discriminate against anyone on the basis of amongst others sex and gender. Affirmative action measures and the protection of disadvantaged groups are called for. All these and many others are a clear Constitutional commitment to gender equality.
- Legislative - A body of laws including the Maintenance Act, the Domestic Violence Act and the Choice on the Termination of Pregnancy Act have been passed which are the cornerstones for gender equality. Besides such gender specific Acts others such as Employment Equity, Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination, Land Bank Amendment Acts, amongst others, have positively impacted on the lives of women. Without doubt we have made great strides within a very short time to advance towards the achievement of legislative equality between women and men.
- Institutional - The establishment of the Office on the Status of Women (OSW) strategically located in the President's Office at the national level and in the Premiers' Offices at provincial level; gender units in all government departments; the Parliamentary Committee on the Improvement of the Quality of Life and Status of Women (CIQLSW); the Women's Empowerment Unit (WEU); the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE) is the route towards the institutionalisation of gender equality. Similar structures are being mooted at municipal levels.
- International - South Africa is a signatory to international conventions and agreements such as the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) to count a few. Reports confirm the strides that have been made in implementing these commitments.
- Access - The fact that 29.8% of members of parliament are women and that women now make up 38.09% of Ministers and Deputy Ministers ensures access and substantive participation of women in decision making processes at the highest level.

- Transformation of gender relations: The constitutional, legislative and institutional gains as well as access and participation creates an environment and conditions for transformation. Transformation is to a large extent taking place both at the practical and strategic gender needs levels, e.g. access to basic services such as water, electricity, health improves the quality of life of women. Women are beginning to regain their dignity and taking responsibility for their lives and societal patriarchal attitudes are beginning to change as evidenced by, for example, the growing anger towards violence against women. In the private sector and in civil society women are making their mark and gaining recognition thus shifting the patriarchal mindsets and changing the stereotypes. There are, in general, painfully slow strides towards changing the power relations between women and men. Needless to say there is still a "long walk" to gender equality but the initial steps have been taken.

However, the above and many other gains are also accompanied by tensions, setbacks and threats to the very agenda of transforming gender relations. The new context meant that there was a shift towards political parties in society and redefinition of identities. Political centredness and political identities re-emerged. The women's movement and its agenda were affected by this strong political centredness. Women's interests were articulated through the political parties' policies.

Diversity and difference tended to supersede commonalities in the parliamentary sphere - after all these women had been elected on a party ticket and not on a "women's" ticket. Their allegiance and accountability was first and foremost to their political parties. What had always been understood if not always articulated that there were no universal "women's interests" that could be represented by "women", prevailed.

Access and participation of a large number of women in parliament is an achievement that put South Africa as number 10 out of the 130 parliaments in the World in terms of the women's advancement in governance. The unintended consequence of the movement into parliament may have been the weakening of our structures in the Alliance and especially the ANCWL at leadership level.

Perhaps not enough planning was done to ensure that the organisations were not denuded of experienced and skilled cadres. We perhaps also did not politically groom a younger generation that would inject new life into gender activism as well as reach out to where we could not reach because of our deployment in parliament. As a result the ANCWL leadership is spread very thinly and that impacts negatively on its capacity to play its leadership role in the gender movement. The Alliance as a whole is not sufficiently playing its role as the core of this movement. What gender activists both in and outside parliament have also bemoaned is the weakening of structured relations between those gender activists in parliament and government and those outside. And yet, experience elsewhere has shown the importance of links between all gender activists and a strong gender movement engaging on all fronts.

Academic feminists and gender activists also began to withdraw into their areas of expertise. Some of them seemed to be suspicious of the capability of the state to transform gender relations. A section of this group seems to be wondering if the gender activists in parliament/government were not absorbed into the patriarchal system.

Many feminist activists acted as if unsure of the role that they can play in a democratic society. And yet some gender activists in parliament especially women, in their day-to-day operation seemed to sometimes forget the gender agenda. In some instances and from a distance, mainstreaming the gender agenda seems more like "male streaming" the agenda. Of course lack of direct engagement between the activists does not help to clarify the dynamics of governance and the complexity of mainstreaming gender into the overall transformative agenda.

Women - especially black women - in the private sector, thanks to the relatively gender sensitive laws and environment, are painstakingly crawling up the corporate ladder. However, patriarchy seems to be so embedded in that sphere that, from a distance, it seems that these women find it difficult to challenge the male definition, values and practice of corporate power.

The context, demands and challenges of our times make it difficult for gender activists located in the various spheres to connect, interact and create effective linkages for the gender agenda. The "them and us" divide seems to be dangerously lurking in the margins of the Women's Movement.

There has also been a weakness in our ability to theorise about and engage in current discourse on gender and feminism especially in developing societies and within the notions of globalisation.

There is also relative dependency on a democratic State and its machinery e.g. tendency for society to expect state or government to deliver. This dependency was in other sectors coupled with a kind of demobilisation or role confusion of organs of civil society. Whereas these sectors had previously been used to antagonistic contradictions within the state and government, they were to some extent confused as to what role they could play in a democratic society. The women's movement is part of that role confusion and relative demobilisation.

There is, especially after the semi-collapse of the WNC, a decline and fragmentation of the women's movement. But this must not be mistaken for the collapse of women's activism around gender related issues. We have to understand that new centres and micro-organisations with a degree of specialisation and professionalism have emerged. For instance, there is growth of organisations and networks such as the Network against Violence against Women and interesting new organisations such as Men for Change that focus on counselling abusive men and fighting against violence against women, Agisanang Domestic Abuse Prevention and Training (ADAPT) also working with men, GETNET working with both women and men in gender and many others.

Women in our localities - the rural areas and townships, especially those referred to as "grassroots women" continue to mobilise and organise especially around their economic and socio-political needs.

Though there may be lack of coordination, cohesiveness and coherency, women and indeed gender activists are organised and organising towards gender equality even though some of them may not define their objectives in those terms. The women's movement of the past, due to the current conditions, may have been broken down to its components which are issue- or sector-based.

This in itself is not bad, but needs a better understanding of how the different struggles can and should be effectively and efficiently woven, not necessarily in structural forms but in action, to a coherent and vibrant movement. The importance and power of a movement lies in its ability to unite different sectors in a manner that utilises their strength for them to make an impact and bring about change.

At present, while women and gender activists are on the move and indeed making change, they are not putting their strength to optimum effect because of the lack of coordination. This is not peculiar only to the Women's Movement but is prevalent amongst the democratic forces or 'MDM'. The Women's Movements can be presented in a kind of a continuum with two ends with pliable boundaries that allow for movement between and amongst these.

While it is critical that we organise and mobilise independently wherever we are and around our issues, it is also crucial that the bigger picture must not be sacrificed at the altar of the micro level.

Towards a Broad Movement for transformation of gender relations Perhaps now is the moment to reassess and take stock of where we are. The challenges facing us in our transformation agenda demand nothing less. Both the positive and negative developments are indicative of a movement forward and the need for mass activism and a broad movement for transformation of gender relations.

The objective of such a movement would, amongst others, be to:-

- eradicate the oppression, suppression and subordination of women and create a non-sexist society



- break down patriarchy as a system based on and reinforcing the ideology, practices, values, culture, stereotypes and all the manifestations of the unequal power relations between women and men
- redefine and reorient all socialisation institutions in society starting with the family as agents responsible for creating the new person with real non-sexist values.

With such a focus we would be able to understand that the above agenda is not for and by women alone. Also, that there are different strands of women's movements defined by amongst others the aspirations, diversity of needs, interests, issues, methods and organisations. It would not propagate for artificial sisterhood and yet would manage to cut across dividing constructs such as race and class.

It would be informed by a theory that understands the intersection of amongst others class, race and gender, the relationship and interdependence of practical gender needs and strategic gender needs and how one cannot be won without the other. It would also understand that the struggle for non-sexism is not and cannot be outside the class and national struggles. It would be able to, in action find common vision, objectives and programmes around which united action would occur. It would thus be firmly located within the broader struggles and the movement for transformation in South Africa.

Such a movement would not necessarily be launched or formed but would be organic emerging from below and from the experiences and struggles for gender equality. Such a movement would be based on the understanding that that patriarchy is not amenable to simplistic solutions. That continued fragmentation of our struggles against patriarchy will in the long run lead to the withering away of the gender movement and the defeat of the transformation agenda.

The driving force behind such a movement would of course be the Alliance with its understanding of the relationship between the national, class and gender struggles, its record and commitment to struggle and above all its historic mission to create a democratic, non-sexist and non-racial South Africa.

With such an approach networks such as a reorganised WNC could perhaps play a meaningful role. It could, for instance become an "enabler" using its resources located in its affiliates to empower the less skilled women and their organisations so that they can speak for themselves and participate effectively in changing their own lives.

Conclusion

For the above we need the politics of and commitment to transformation. Such tools will enable us to have a clear vision and base from which to move. An agenda and programme around which we unite will act as the glue that will help bind us together. Trust and confidence in each other will help to cement a national consensus on the above. That will also help us to understand that there is no one with the monopoly to liberate us from backward systems such as patriarchy. Of course without the will and ability to organise and struggle we are unlikely to progress far in achieving whatever shining vision we have of a non-sexist society.

Good governance needs an effective parliament

By Firoz Cachalia

Introduction

The idea of a "People's Parliament" has been at the centre of the ANC's political vision. But what this might mean in specific institutional terms has received little attention in our publications and conferences. The result has been that the views of our parliamentary opponents, and academic and



media critics has tended to dominate public debate. And the contribution that Parliament/Legislatures could make to the achievement of the objectives of our movement has not been thought through.

Recent events in the National Parliament, particularly its Public Accounts and Ethics Committees, make this task all the more urgent. Since one of the functions of Parliament/Legislatures is to create and sustain a government, actions which undermine Parliament/Legislatures, undermine the authority of the government in the long term, making it more difficult to mobilise support for its decisions.

My point of departure is that good governance, and the realisation of the ANC's political project depends on the development of a "strong" Parliament/Legislatures. This so because Parliament/Legislatures play a crucial role in identifying the needs of the people, articulating their experiences and views and thus in determining the national political agenda. As "oversight bodies", they help identify problems of policy failure that require attention and help in overcoming bureaucratic inertia.

In this regard, I will make two preliminary points. Firstly, building a strong Parliament/Legislatures will depend on the ANC as the governing party taking a long term view on the decision making structures and management systems that are appropriate for a "People's Parliament". Reactions to immediate political pressures and considerations of short term political advantage should not be at the expense of long term goals. Secondly, building a strong Parliament/ Legislatures should be approached in the spirit of what Roberto Unger, the Brazilian social activist and intellectual has called "democratic experimentalism". The institutions of a constitutional democracy, including representative bodies have widely come to be regarded as fundamental. But they should be regarded as a point of departure, not the end point of the project of building a democratic, socially just and humane society. Representative democracies, in Unger' words "can assume many different institutional forms, with radically different consequences for society". We should therefore constantly be thinking about how our Parliament/ Legislatures should be designed as institutions to reflect our people's ideals and interests.

Strengthening Parliament in a parliamentary system

Most theorists of transition would agree that the framers of our Constitution were correct to choose a parliamentary, as opposed to a presidential system of democratic government. Such systems, together with proportional representation, tend to produce inclusive government, as opposed to "winner takes all" outcomes common in presidential systems, and is therefore conducive to the consolidation of democracy in societies with a recent history of conflict.

Since the political majority in parliament also controls the government, the Executive and the Legislature are 'fused' and the likelihood of conflict between the two branches of government, common in American type systems based on a clearer separation of powers, is reduced. Party discipline ensures that the governing majority acts cohesively. These characteristics of parliamentary systems facilitate the translation of the objectives of the electoral majority into government decisions and the effective exercise of Executive authority.

Parliamentary systems tend however, also to produce an imbalance in the relationship between the Executive and Parliament/Legislatures and a subordination of the internal workings of Parliament/ Legislatures to the requirements of the government. This is so because the members on whose support the government is dependent to sustain it in office, and who are subject to party discipline, are at the same time required to subject the government to critical scrutiny. This can lead to a weakening of Parliament/Legislatures investigative and oversight roles and to less transparent, accountable and effective government.

The weakening of Parliament/legislature(s) tendency evident in parliamentary systems is by no means inevitable. In fact, a range of 'types' of parliament - ranging from 'rubberstamp' parliaments through 'arena' type parliaments to more transformative representatives bodies appear in parliamentary systems. The German Bundestag for instance, plays a critically important role in relation to both government legislation and the budget. Contextual factors like the orientation of the leadership and membership of the governing party, relationships within and between parties and the resources available to Parliament/legislature(s), etc will have an impact.



In South Africa, the character of the governing party as a liberation movement committed to democracy and the presence of a large number of talented, idealistic and influential leaders in both branches of government immediately after the establishment of democracy, ensured an initial strengthening of the representative branch of government. But in the long term, as the composition of the governing party undergoes some inevitable change, and the political leadership becomes more closely associated with the Executive, the normal 'weakening' tendency in parliamentary systems may begin to prevail in the absence of a clear ANC vision and conscious strategy to sustain the vitality of the representative branch of government.

Some commentators suggest that the unusually strong position of the governing party at present will reinforce this tendency. They fail to appreciate that the strident, media-driven style of some opposition parties, and their narrow emphasis on the role of Parliament/legislature(s) as a 'check' and 'limit' on the authority of the Executive, are important factors limiting the capacity of parliament to play a role in promoting not only accountability and good governance, but service delivery and development. C E S Frank for instance, maintains "parliament is far from a negligible tool... But the present processes of policy-making place an unnatural and heavy burden on it. Confrontation and conflict, posturing for the media, oversimplification and trivialisation... The subordination of every aspect of parliaments or approach to the legislative process to the demands of partisan warfare, all follow from parliament's strange role".

Question period for instance has the important function of providing parliament with information which will enable parliament to play a role in promoting accountability and service delivery. Therefore, MPs/MPLs who have been elected to support the government should be willing to question the government on behalf of their party and the electorate. However, many are not sure that this would be appropriate. And the opposition approaches question period with a view to short-term tactical advantage. As Sir Michael Quinlan told the Scott Commission of Inquiry, the activity of giving and seeking information in parliament, has become, "in a certain sense analogous to a game... in the sense that it is a competitive activity conducted within rules largely for a purpose different from that of its apparent form". While the form is to bring information into the public domain, the prime purpose is on the one hand "to give the government a hard time". And on the other "for the government to avoid having a hard time". The "opposition will seek to extract information which they can use to portray the government in a bad light: and they will... feel free thereafter to exploit the information, if necessary selectively and tendentiously, to that end. The government for its part will be reluctant to disclose information of a kind, or in a form that will help the opposition to do so". The so called "strong opposition", which judges its efficacy by the number of embarrassing questions it asks, thus promotes a politics of "smoke and mirrors" and erodes the capacity of Parliament/legislature(s) to deal constructively with the problems our society confronts.

Whatever the causes of this potential weakening, I would argue that the ANC should to be committed to maintaining and strengthening the representative branches of government, since the idea of a 'strong' Parliament/legislature(s) is consistent with notions of democracy implicit in ANC traditions as well as in contemporary notions of good governance. This later aspect is of critical importance since it helps to position the ANC clearly in the context of global cultural and political trends and improves the attractiveness of South Africa as a destination for foreign direct investment. Furthermore, 'strong' Parliaments/legislature(s) draw on the talents, energies and expertise of all deployees to government, whereas 'weak' Parliaments/legislature(s) tend to encourage passivity and inaction among "back-benchers".

Parliamentary strengthening comes in many guises depending on the objectives it is intended to serve. For instance, it may aim at enhancing the 'effectiveness' of the opposition or at strengthening the capacity of private members to initiate legislation. Institutional innovation in the design Parliament/Legislatures aimed at strengthening the representative branch of government, which inspired by the ANC's perspectives should, I believe, satisfy the following criteria:

- It should not be counter-posed to Executive authority. Indeed as members of the governing party we ought crucially to be interested in encouraging measures which enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Executive, which promote the capacity of ministers to direct the bureaucracy, etc.



- It should respect the limits of the parliamentary system. Not only will innovation which does not do so fail, but risks jettisoning the desirable features of parliamentary systems.
- It should promote good governance, accountability and transparency.
- It should promote development, service delivery and enhance the overall performance of government.

I do not intend in this paper to set out a comprehensive and detailed programme of institutional innovation. I will put forward only embryonic ideas and suggest some pointers in the hope that this will stimulate creative thinking in our movement on these issues.

A. Representation

Representative bodies form the central pillar of democratic government. Through our system of cooperative governance incorporating Provincial Legislatures and the electoral system based on proportionality, the framers of our Constitution sought to reinforce representation and inclusivity. This aspect of our system helps to contain conflict by encouraging an expression of societal differences within rather than against institutions, to create a stable framework in which the governing party can govern and to sustain democracy in a complex and diverse society.

But the rituals associated with parliamentary politics and the class, gender, and racial inequalities in our society tend to demobilise popular participation in politics. It is therefore necessary to take positive steps to overcome obstacles to participation.

Participatory democracy is sometimes counter-posed to representative government. But strategies to improve public participation can also be thought of as reinforcing and strengthening representative government - by providing public representatives with information they would not otherwise have but which is necessary for effective and responsive decision-making. Strategies to facilitate and promote public participation are also critical in ensuring the participation of marginalised and under-resourced constituencies in decision-making by representative bodies. In the absence of special measures, public decision-making is also vulnerable to 'capture' by special interests.

Gauteng has established a Public Participation and Petitions Office separate from the Information and Communication Directorate, with dedicated staff and budget and with a mandate to promote public participation by marginalised constituencies. The office has engaged in an extensive public education programme and has worked effectively with the committee section to promote public participation in committee hearings.

The Legislature has also pioneered a petitions procedure which gives effect to the constitutional right to the petition. A Petitions Committee (a kind of parliamentary Ombud) has been established, which provides citizens with a cheap form of administrative justice (to challenge termination of a grant for instance) and with a surrogate form of constituency representation (since constituents are able, whether or not their deployed representative is working, to raise matters directly with the Legislature). Both the rules and the petitions law that has been adopted, place a positive obligation on the Legislature to assist those who may be unable to petition (for reasons of illiteracy, for instance).

The content of the petitions indicates that some marginalised and unresourced constituencies are aware of the procedure and are using it. The petitions office has received petitions relating to a wide variety of matters including, applications for disability grants, pensions, dependants of prisoners, complaints of inaction by a Town Treasurer, inaction by the legal aid board, inaction by the Soweto City Council, provision of housing in an informal settlement in Centurion, evictions in Lanseria, a proposed road in Thokoza, the Land Restitution process, complaints by inner city tenants, forced removal of tenants from an informal settlement, corruption by Town Council officials and evictions in Chiawelo.

The ANC should perhaps think about establishing a petitions committee in the National Parliament.

B. Oversight

One of the more important roles of Parliament/ Legislatures is as bodies which exercise scrutiny and oversight over the Executive. The dominant, 'traditional' model of parliamentary oversight emphasises the "separation of powers" and "checks and balances". While not entirely displacing this paradigm, oversight could also be thought of as a way of promoting cooperation between the Executive and Parliament/legislature(s) and in this way contributing to accelerated service delivery. In the words of the report on oversight commissioned by national parliament (Corder et al): "The oversight role is often seen as that of opposition parties alone, designed to police and expose maladministration and corruption. Such a view is limited and deficient.

Oversight and accountability helps to ensure the Executive implements laws in a way required by the Legislature and the dictates of the Constitution. The legislature is in this way able to keep control over the laws that it passes and to promote the constitutional values of accountability and good governance. Thus oversight must be seen as one of the central tenets of our democracy because through it the legislature can ensure that the Executive is carrying out its mandates, monitor the implementation of its legislative policy and draw on these experiences for future law-making. Through it we can ensure effective government.

Seen in this light the oversight function of the legislature compliments rather than hampers the effective delivery of services with which the Executive is entrusted". The ANC and the government should therefore be committed to reinforcing the scrutiny functions of the representative branch of government.

It is important here to be a little more specific. The question is how, through their oversight function, can committees contribute to enhancing service delivery? The traditional oversight/accountability model is a form of compliance auditing. Its *raison d'etre* is the discovery of error. But a delivery enhancing concept of oversight should primarily be aimed at identifying the systemic causes of policy failure by monitoring the implementation of policy and programmes. Committees have to have the requisite resources, information and expertise to assume the role of monitoring in the policy cycle.

The relevant Standing Committees could also consider developing a set of performance monitoring criteria (e.g. socio-economic indicators like infant mortality rates, access to potable water, nutritional status) to monitor whether the government's poverty alleviation programmes are working with a view to improving their implementation. The Gauteng Legislature is currently examining ways of enhancing the capacity of Standing Committees to monitor expenditure and programme results.

It is off course arguable that monitoring could just as easily be the responsibility of departments. Perhaps it should be a 'shared' responsibility. But civil servants are hardly always the best judges of the efficacy of their own ideas. A role for parliament in the monitoring of the implementation of policy may in fact enhance overall performance of government.

C. The Executive, Parliament and Ministerial Accountability

In Parliamentary systems, the constitutional lodestar of accountability is the doctrine of Ministerial accountability. The South African Constitution creates a Parliamentary Executive which is accountable to Parliament.

Section 92(2) provides that "members of the Cabinet are accountable individually and collectively to Parliament". Section 92(3)(b), requires Ministers to provide Parliament "with full and regular reports concerning matters under their control". Section 102 subjects the continuation of government to the will of Parliament.

But the application of this doctrine of Ministerial responsibility in different situations is not always clear. These are matters which require debate within the ANC.

The traditional approach to Executive accountability to the Legislature assumes, at least in theory, that Ministers alone exercise the powers of executive government and can be called to account both for their own acts and for those done on their behalf. Civil servants on the other hand, have no direct responsibility to Parliament.

It is arguable that the traditional doctrine's refusal to allow a distinction between political and managerial responsibility, does not accord with the realities of modern government, discourages frankness and candour on the part of Ministers, and is inconsistent with public sector reforms. The Public Finance Management Act for instance, draws a clear distinction between the accountability of "executive authorities" (Ministers) and "Accounting Officers" (Heads of Departments).

Opposition parties tend to rely on the traditional conception of Ministerial accountability. Ministers are routinely called upon to resign whenever things go wrong. I think the ANC should emphasise more modern notions of accountability, which do not jettison the element of resignation for malfeasance, but shifts the emphasis from the apportionment of blame to the obligation to provide accurate information to the House and the correction of error.

Strategically, such a paradigm shift would locate the ANC clearly in the new thinking on accountability, defuse unproductive political pressures on individual ministers and enhance both the accountability of the Executive to Parliament/legislature(s) and the effectiveness of these bodies. In addition, the traditional conception of accountability assumes that Ministers but not civil servants are directly accountable to Parliament/legislature(s). It is arguable that the "new accountability" should require direct accountability of civil servants to Parliament/Legislatures. Again, this could have the effect of improving overall performance. Fears that this approach could lead to tensions between ministers and their officials have generally not proved to be well founded. Consideration should be given to taking the political initiative on these issues at the appropriate time. A code of conduct for ministers and civil servants setting out their responsibilities to Parliament/legislature(s) could be considered as part of this ANC led initiative.

D. Strengthening the Governing Party in Parliament/Legislatures

The debate about the role of Caucuses has correctly concluded that these structures are subordinate to the constitutional structures of the ANC. But the role that caucuses play in governance has been neglected. I put forward the following hypothesis: strong caucuses produce strong Parliament/Legislatures and consequently contribute to effective governance: conversely, weak caucuses produce weak Parliament/ Legislatures. Within Parliament/Legislatures, caucuses play a critically important role in ensuring party cohesion, discipline and unity, which are essential preconditions for effective leadership by the governing party within Parliament/Legislatures.

Matters of Parliamentary strategy and tactics should be subject to full and adequate discussion within caucus. Caucuses also play an important role in monitoring the Executive. Caucuses should therefore be thought of as collectives with decision-making responsibilities on political issues, as opposed to merely administrative matters.

While caucuses have important responsibilities within Parliament/Legislatures, these should not be carried out in a way which subordinates the investigative responsibilities of Parliament/Legislatures.

E. Strengthening the Legislative Sector

The transition to democracy in South Africa produced a bicameral national Parliament and nine Provincial Legislatures. Some of the Legislatures had to be established from scratch. Others inherited parts of administrations established under the previous order.

From their inception, newly established provincial Legislatures in particular, faced many challenges. They had to draw their staff from a very limited pool of skills, develop systems to manage their human resources and budgets, establish committees with inexperienced members, adopt new Rules, etc.

It is not surprising therefore, that they show elements of "weakness"- sit infrequently, pass little legislation, are dependent on the Executive for information and their budget allocations, etc.

This "weakness" undermines the capacity of the ANC to consolidate democracy, promote accountability, improve governance and accelerate delivery. Development and transformation of the legislative sector must therefore be one of the central strategic priorities of the ANC. The ANC has to



develop a vision, and take a long-term view of the development of legislatures as institutions with an important if not a central role in our democracy.

F. The Politics of Parliamentary Strengthening

The "strong" Parliament model does pose some risk for the governing party in an adversarial and politically contentious environment. Nevertheless, I think that the emphasis on the constructive role of Parliament/Legislatures will resonate with our own constituency, promote good governance, strengthen the performance of the governing party in Parliament/Legislatures and enhance service delivery. The government therefore has an interest in Parliamentary strengthening and should support efforts aimed in this direction. Parliamentary strengthening also requires a willingness to cooperate across party lines on basic issues of institutional design.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that the ANC should explicitly seek to promote a 'strong' Parliament/legislature(s) within the framework and limits of a parliamentary system. This will help consolidate democracy, improve governance, accelerate delivery, and position the ANC favourably in the global context.

Developing a 'strong' Parliament/legislature(s) involves articulating an alternative conception of parliamentary politics, which fundamentally unsettles the trivialising logic of "oppositionism". Moreover and most important, the idea of strong Parliament/ Legislatures is entirely consistent with and arguably required by our transformative political project.

International

A report on the 9th Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam

By Mandla Nkomfe and Smiso Nkwanyana

Introduction

The Communist Party of Vietnam held its 9th National Congress from 19-22, April 2001, in Hanoi, Vietnam. The main objectives of the congress were to assess the 15 years of renewal that started in 1986, to examine the international balance of forces and the role of Vietnam in it as well as the challenges facing the Party organisationally, politically and ideologically. The Congress covered the following themes;

- Vietnam in the 20th century;
- Current situation in the country in the last five years and the main lessons of the 15 years of renewal;
- Path to Socialism;
- Socio-economic development policy and strategy;
- Enhancing National Defence and Security;
- Promotion of Unity and Strength.

The Congress elected a central committee under the leadership of the new General Secretary Cde Nong Duc Manh. The new central Committee consists of a blend of older and new generation of cadres.



Brief Background

The history of Vietnam is indissolubly linked to the countries of South East Asia. The colonial powers created what came to be known as Indo-China. Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Malaysia and Vietnam constituted this geo-political entity. The process of liberation started with the freeing of North Vietnam. At the centre of the forces that overthrew the French and the Japanese occupiers in August 1945 was the Communist Party under the leadership of President Ho Chi Minh. The liberation of the North gave the revolutionary forces a base from which to launch a protracted struggle to free the rest of the country.

To understand the history of Vietnam, we need to briefly go back to its ancient past. The notion of Vietnam as a political entity came from its early inhabitants. Vietnam is written in two words, Viet and Nam. Viet is the name of an ethnic group and Nam means south. Therefore Vietnam means the people of the south. It is a country south of China. The Vietnamese people are direct descendants of inhabitants who were a cross between the Mongoloids who came down from the north and the original Austronegroids.

The formation and the development of the Vietnamese as a nation took place in the period of the first 1000 years. This was a period in which their civilisation was blossoming. It was the era of the Bronze Age. The Vietnamese as a nation pride themselves as inheritors of an ancient civilisation. By the 10th century the Vietnamese nation was already located within a clearly defined territory, had a common language and civilisation, and an effective centralised administration.

In 1070, the first university was established in Hanoi. The university was used to train the mandarin bureaucracy. Underpinning the political structure was the Confucianist philosophy. Students from different villages came to this University to graduate with their PhDs. This was the first school of public administration in Vietnam.

The first foreign domination of the Vietnamese people was by their Chinese neighbours who ruled for more than 1000 years (179 BC to 938AD). This period was characterised by intensive wars of resistance against foreign aggression. The Chinese rulers brought with them (via the mandarins) Confucianism and to some extent Buddhism. These coexisted with other indigenous religions, which were predominantly animistic in nature.

For about 900 years after the Chinese rule, the Vietnamese people enjoyed national independence and freedom (938-1858). Prominent amongst other dynasties were the Ly and the Nguyen dynasties. But this freedom was limited to the feudal lords and not to the ordinary peasants. It is in this period that the royal national dynasties entrenched their rule over the peasants. This period of national rule was ended by the colonisation of Vietnam by the French colonisers. This foreign aggression lasted for some 80 years. Also in this period, the Japanese joined the French in occupying Vietnam.

The war of liberation

Early in February 1930, the Indochina Communist Party and the Annam Communist Party merged into a single organisation to form the Communist Party of Vietnam. The communist Party of Vietnam has thus been a pivotal force in the struggle to liberate Vietnam and unite the whole country. The Party together with the Vietminh guided by Ho Chi Minh and General Vo Nguyen Giap led an insurrection that brought an end to foreign rule over North Vietnam in August 1945.

From 1945 to 1975 the Vietnamese people consolidated the democratic republic in the North and continued to fight for the liberation of the South. This period consisted of the war against the French from 1945 to 1954. This liberated northern Vietnam and established the people's republic of Vietnam with comrade Ho Chi Minh as the President of the country. But the revolution was not completed without the liberation of the South, which was under the rule of the Americans via their puppets. This then inaugurated a war of resistance, which culminated in the taking over of Saigon that today is known as Ho Chi Minh City. Eventually the Americans had to flee Saigon. From 1975 onwards, the Vietnamese scored major achievements such as the establishment of people's power in the South,



national reunification, economic rehabilitation and overcoming social and economic crisis that was brought about by successive imperialist regimes such as the French and the Americans.

Renewal and Renovation

In 1986, the Communist Party of Vietnam started a process of renovation, renewal and national reconstruction. The main focus of this era was on building the agricultural sector capable of producing food; consumer goods and the increase of export articles. It also aimed to rebuild cities and communities that were devastated by the American bombardments of Vietnam. This period of renewal and renovation was known as Doi Moi.

Along the lines of Doi Moi, the 8th Party Congress further laid down important tasks for the 1996-2000 period, put goals of achieving rapid, highly effective and sustainable economic growth in providing solutions to pressing social problems; ensure national defence and security; improve the people's living conditions and thus creating solid premises for a higher measure of development at the beginning of the 21st century.

In the course of this process, the Vietnamese Communist Party had to embrace a socialist market economy and moved away from command driven state economy. The key elements of this strategy were the following;

1. Economic Reconstruction and National Rebuilding focusing on the development of the agricultural sector;
2. Development and expansion of the public sector in economic development so as to ensure that the state sector is capable of playing a decisive role in the transformation process.

In assessing the successes and challenges of the renewal process, the Communist Party of Vietnam has made the following observations that:

- The country has registered convincing economic growth with GDP increase of 7% on average annually. Industrial production continues to maintain an average yearly increase of 13,5%. There is a marked increase in other production sectors including agriculture, with infrastructural systems being enhanced;
- Progress has been made in the cultural and social fields and people's lives have been improved. These include areas like education and training; culture; the essential needs of the people as well as sports and physical training;
- Party building and rectification, the political system has been consolidated. This involves consolidation of its leadership role in society;

The Party also made the following observations with regard to weaknesses and shortcomings:

- The solution of certain pressing and acute socio-cultural problems is still slow. The rates of urban and rural unemployment remain high. The number of HIV/AIDS patients has increased;
- The transition into the socialist market economy had a negative subjective impact on cadreship of the party in terms of its political, ideological and moral commitments to the revolution. In this sense the party was starting to grapple with individualism, corruption, opportunism and the violation of people's virtues.
- Corruption in and the perversion of the political ideology, ethics and lifestyle within and amongst Party officials and members continue at an alarming rate.

The overall lessons can be summarised as follows:

- In the process of renewal, it is imperative to persist in the goal of national independence and socialism on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's Thoughts;
- The understanding of the renewal should rely on the people, and be in the interest of the people, conformable to reality, and always creative;
- In the renewal process, the nation's strength should be combined with that of the times;



- The Party's constitutional guidelines constitute the decisive factor for the success of the renewal process.

Towards National Construction in the Period of Transition to Socialism The recently held 9th Congress of the Vietnamese Communist Party adopted a political programme for the period of transition to socialism. The key elements of the programme of transition consist of the following:

1. Building up the Socialist State whose foundation is based on the unity of the working class, peasantry and the Intelligentsia;
2. Development of the productive forces, to industrialise the country in the direction of modernisation, combined with the development of a comprehensive agriculture;
3. Commensurate with the development of productive forces, to gradually establish socialist relations of production from the lowest to the highest levels and diversified forms of ownership. This means developing a socialist-oriented multi-sector commodity economy operating with a market mechanism and under State management;
4. This process is aimed at attracting investment and improving the state owned enterprises technologically. This will have to be carried out in a period of five years;
5. In bringing in private capital, the state will continue with its controlling share and therefore drive the restructuring process;
6. The state enterprises are expected to be leaders and pioneers in the scientific and technological fields;
7. The 4th Party Central Committee Plenum of the 8th tenure in line with 8Th Congress Resolution on accelerating equitisation of SOE's in which it is not necessary for the state to hold a 100% capital share, mandated the presiding authorities to make a decision on various forms of equitisation. These forms involve the state holding a dominant share, or enterprises in which the state holds a special share and the enterprises in which the state holds a limited share.
8. All the above are set to place in motion the implementation of the policy of the development of a multi-sectoral economy and solicit participation of all people, so as to be consistent with the national construction and development.
9. To carry out the socialist revolution in the ideological and cultural spheres;
10. To implement a policy of national unity, to consolidate and broaden the National United Front;
11. To twin the objective of building of socialism with that of defending the homeland;
12. Build a Party that is ethically, politically, ideologically and organisationally strong, and equal to its tasks.
13. The "People Know, People do and People respect" guides cadres in carrying programmes of National Reconstruction.
14. Fighting opportunism and opportunistic manifestations in the Party.

This political programme of transition is dependent on the stability of the country's political system and the continued leadership role of the Party. Part of this process should be the understanding that all the organisations and operations of the state are aimed at building and gradually perfecting socialist democracy. Central to the task of national reconstruction is the role of organisations like the Vietnamese Fatherland Front and the people's organisations.

The Vietnamese Fatherland Front is the political alliance of people's organisations and individual representatives from different social classes and strata, nationalities and religions. This political front is the political basis and expression of people's power. The Communist Party is both a member and a leader of this alliance.

Conclusion

The present process of steering society towards a socialist order is dependent on the ideological, political and programmatic clarity of the Party. The challenges facing that Party are to continue the rectification process, improvement of its leadership capacity and combativeness in carrying out its tasks.



The massive economic development of Vietnam's economy in taking place comes against the backdrop of massive United States blockade during the cold war period as well as the suffering caused by the bombardments.

Through sheer commitment and determination Vietnam is back in the global economic arena. In this process of renewal and through the help of other international organisations, key issues such as food security, housing and the stabilisation of the agricultural sector have been addressed.

Zimbabwe and South Africa: Anatomy of a crisis revisited

By Moeletsi Mbeki

The emerging situation in Zimbabwe poses the greatest threat to national security our young democracy has yet faced. As with all threats, there are of course also opportunities that are presented by the situation in Zimbabwe.

In its misguided drive to stay in power whatever the wishes of the people of Zimbabwe, ZANU (PF) has decided it will stop at nothing. It has decided to destroy whatever democratic institutions and processes were built since independence in 1980. Above all ZANU (PF) has decided to racialise politics in Zimbabwe.

It is this racialising of Zimbabwe's politics that has transformed what was an internal economic crisis in Zimbabwe into a threat to South Africa. First there is the expropriation (and brutalisation) of white Zimbabweans of their farms by extra-legal means for no other reason than that they are white. This is accompanied by the brutalisation of farm workers on commercial farms because after all, according to President Mugabe, their ancestors came from Malawi and Mozambique.

The brutalisation of all black urban working class Zimbabweans soon follows because after all they voted for the opposition Movement for Democratic Change, MDC.

Soon there will be the expropriation and brutalisation of Ndebele Zimbabweans for no other reason than that they are Ndebele. Before long there will be a falling out among ZANU (PF) leaders, which will also be turned into a conflict among the clans that make up the Shona people.

An unlikely scenario? Only to those, like the author of Zimbabwe: Anatomy of a Crisis (Umrabulo No. 9, November 2000) who cover up limited knowledge of ZANU (PF) with high-sounding phrases.

ZANU (PF) leaders have always found it difficult to resist the temptation of racial and ethnic politics. The first time the world's attention was drawn to this was by the international commission of inquiry organised by Zambia and the OAU to investigate events leading to the assassination of then ZANU (PF) leader, Herbert Chitepo, in 1974. The Commissioners uncovered a tangle of ethnic-based intrigues among elements of the Shona clans competing for the control of the party.

In the 1980s the ZANU (PF) government conducted a vicious campaign, against the rural Ndebele population of Matebele Land and the Midlands, killing and maiming thousands. The cutting edge of this particular campaign was the Fifth Brigade, a Shona only unit of the Zimbabwe National Army, (ZNA) trained for the task by the North Koreans.

Today the Zimbabwe government and its army, are at war in the Democratic Republic of Congo in defence of the unelected Kabila I and II regimes. One of the close allies of the ZNA in this particular campaign are the Interahamwe, Hutu perpetrators in 1994 of the unspeakable crime of genocide and ethnic cleansing against the Tutsi population of Rwanda.



But why is ZANU (PF)'s racial and ethnic politics a threat to our national security today when they were not in the past? The answer is twofold. In the 1980s when ZANU (PF) conducted its atrocities against the Ndebele population, South Africa was ruled by a white regime and therefore was closed to all black people except as migrant workers. This is no longer the case. Huge African population movements across South Africa's borders are therefore feasible now, which they were not under apartheid.

Secondly, in the 1980's ZANU (PF) used state structures to intimidate the Ndebele population; today it is using militia against a broader cross section of the population that supports the MDC. This tactic is more likely to create a social upheaval and therefore large population displacements. The unification of ZANU (PF) with PF (ZAPU) in 1987 led to the ethnic integration of State institutions in Zimbabwe, except perhaps for the Central Intelligence Organisation. This is why Zanu (PF) now has to organise a private militia - the so-called liberation war veterans.

Before returning to Denga's article on Zimbabwe, let us remind ourselves why two thirds of the electorate of South Africa supports the ANC despite its indifferent economic performance during the past seven years; non-agricultural private sector employment has been falling steadily in South Africa throughout the last decade. The ANC's founding principle is non-racism and opposition to ethnic politics. This was articulated at its founding conference nearly 90 years ago by Pixley ka I Seme; it was restated unambiguously by the Kliptown Conference which drew up the Freedom Charter 45 years ago. This is why the people of South Africa support the ANC. Lest I be accused by ZANU (PF)'s new found friends in the ANC of maligning ZANU (PF) behind its back in the safety and comfort of South Africa, in October 1984 I wrote an extensive article for ZANU (PF)'s official journal, Zimbabwe News, pointing out that ZANU (PF)'s continued association with Spirit Mediums reinforced ethnicity in the party.

Let me now return to Denga's article. One must congratulate Umrabulo's editors for their efforts to open discussion on the Zimbabwe crisis. It is important however that this discussion must be based on solid information, not on speculation, hearsay, name calling, mud-slinging and the like. Denga's knowledge of Zimbabwe is cursory to say the least. Let me illustrate my point.

- "Historically, the struggle in Zimbabwe has been centred on the land question," writes Denga. Wrong! The Zimbabwe struggle was centred on the issue of one man, one vote, and the implementation of a negotiated independence settlement with Britain as against Ian Smith's unilateral declaration of independence, UDI. Land was only one of many social and economic issues to be addressed after independence.
- According to Denga; "The trade union movement in Zimbabwe owes much of its growth and organisation to the post-war independence era." Later he adds, "the array of classes and strata critical for social, transformation could therefore be defined as follows: a working class with weak traditions of struggle." Wrong again! Zimbabweans cut their teeth as trade union organisers in South Africa during the 1920s in the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union, ICU, and returned home to start their own unions in the 1930s.
- "There was also the demand placed on the fiscus by the security situation in the region, deriving from Zimbabwe's principled support for the liberation movement in South Africa and Namibia," writes Denga. Wrong again! The ZANU (PF) government never engaged or prepared to engage the apartheid regime militarily. Quite the opposite, it regularly arrested Umkhonto we Sizwe guerrillas passing through Zimbabwe.
- "The stage was set at the close of the first decade of independence, for the imposition, by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank of a structural adjustment programme (SAP)." Wrong! structural adjustment programmes in Zimbabwe and elsewhere can only be imposed by governments who have the power to do so; neither the IMF nor the World Bank has such power. SAPs are a condition for an IMF loan.

But more than anything else, it is Denga's bizarre claim that MDC suffers from "an impatience born of inexperience in revolutionary struggle," that betrays the author's ignorance. I know of at least three MDC founder members who were ZIPRA (ZAPU's military wing) regional commanders - a rank of at least Colonel in a conventional army. MDC's president and deputy president -Morgan Tsvangarai and Gibson Sibanda - are seasoned trade unionists. So what should South Africa do in the face of the



emerging disaster that ZANU (PF) is determined to bring about in Zimbabwe? As in all crises, there are many options.

1. We could do nothing and hope the crisis dissipates with minimum damage to South Africa.
2. We could prop up the Zimbabwean economy and/or ask others to do the same in the hope that ZANU (PF) will in the meantime beat the population and the opposition into quiet submission.
3. We could talk nicely to ZANU (PF) and/or enlist others to do likewise to try to point out to its leaders the errors of their ways.
4. We could talk to ZANU (PF) leaders, nicely again, and tell them South Africa will have no truck with racism, tribalism, ethnic cleansing and genocide and that we will take all necessary actions if acts by any of our neighbours threaten to trigger large scale cross-border population movements.
5. We could help the opposition to resist intimidation in the hope that this will persuade ZANU (PF) to respect democratic processes and therefore hold free and fair elections and accept their outcome.
6. We could help ZANU (PF) to crush the opposition so that it stays in power for the foreseeable future and we all go back to business as usual.

Sooner or later our Government leaders will have to choose one or more of these options. They, and all of us, will have to live with the consequences of their decision. Let us hope wiser counsel than Denga's prevail when that time comes.

Much ado about Zimbabwe

By Z. Pallo Jordan

Nelson Mandela writing to PW Botha from his prison cell in 1986, posed the dilemma facing South Africa as reconciling black aspirations for democracy and freedom with white fears and anxieties. As employed by Mandela the term black included all those sections of South African society who were excluded from political power by apartheid.

Mandela has deservedly been praised by all for the sterling efforts he made to assure and reassure white South Africa that it had nothing to fear from democracy. He initiated and made a number of symbolic gestures - a government of national unity; he donned the Springbok rugby jersey; he visited and had tea with Betsy Verwoerd; he invited his persecutor, Percy Yutar, for a chat.

But can any serious observer of the South African political scene suggest that white South Africa made the slightest effort to meet him halfway? The NP withdrew from the Government of National Unity at the insistence of its backbenchers. By the 1999 elections the party of Helen Suzman sounded like that of DF Malan and HF Verwoerd: brazenly inciting racial fear amongst white voters; railing against affirmative action to coloured and Indian voters; opposing any and every measure designed to bring some measure of relief to the most vulnerable and weakest among the poor and exploited.

As Wilmot James has pointed out, the international political environment in which South Africa attained democracy was extremely unfavourable to a movement, like the ANC, that had committed itself to redressing the ills of the past. South Africa's wealth remained essentially in white hands and the ANC government's commitment not to interfere with the existing property relations meant that if it was to fulfill its mandate, it would have to rely on rapid economic growth to achieve any redistribution of wealth. The economy has not grown at a pace commensurate with those commitments.

Stripped of the fancy words, what transpired was that black aspirations were put on hold but the whites received repeated assurances that they really had nothing to fear.



These thoughts sprang to mind after reading Herbert Adam and van Zyl Slabbert's piece on Zimbabwe in the Business Day of 29 March 2001. While one agrees with the two authors that the debate should not be conducted at the level of hyperbole, the two very quickly descend to it themselves.

Suggesting, as they do, that the government of Zimbabwe is morally equivalent to the white minority governments that well-nigh ruined South Africa is a case in point. Whatever its faults, the government led by ZANU (PF) is a government elected by the majority of Zimbabweans in inclusive, non-racial elections. It has been returned to office in an election judged to be acceptable by the international community. No government in this country, prior to 1994, could make the same claim.

That alone places the Zimbabwean government in a very different category from the government of Nigeria's Sani Abacha (a military dictatorship) or PW Botha (a white racist dictatorship). To suggest that the Zimbabwe government be treated the same is not only unreasonable but is of the essence of the over-statement and exaggeration that has characterised the contribution of virtually all white opposition politicians to the debate on Zimbabwe.

The co-authors plumb the depths of the ridiculous in suggesting that the South African government's cautious approach assists the opposition in fuelling white anxieties. Max Du Preez, another stern critic of the government, writing in *The Star*, very aptly highlighted the irony of the white farming community, many of whom within living memory acquired their land at the direct expense of African and coloured communities, today screaming about land restitution measures in which their interests are constitutionally protected. To suggest that the anxieties of such people are the result of mixed signals from government is to test our credulity. Conceit and plain greed is closer to the mark.

What saddens one about all this is that the white political leaders and their spokespersons seem to think that Africans are blind and deaf, or at any rate have no sensibilities worthy of consideration. The signal that the responses from their white compatriots are sending to black communities does not seem to concern any of them in the least.

Diplomacy is about shaping and influencing the context in which another government makes its decisions. When, on the eve of a Commonwealth Summit, Sani Abacha ordered the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa, then President Mandela moved swiftly to break off relations and called for tough measures against the Nigerian military junta. While Britain, France, the USA, Germany and others verbally applauded his actions, not one of these countries followed South Africa's example. British oil multinationals continued business as usual; British banks continued to do business with members of the junta; the USA kept up a vigorous dialogue with Abacha while the US corporations expanded business contacts; France sought to exploit the tension between London and Abuja to its own advantage. South Africa held the moral high ground, but in isolation.

Thus far the democratically elected government of Nigeria has not exacted any price from those who remained on the moral plains. Nor is it likely to. The British oil firms still do their business as usual. The USA dialogues with Obasanjo as it did with Abacha. France is still looking for new opportunities in west Africa. Were these countries acting cynically, or were they responding to their national interests?

Adam and van Zyl Slabbert urge SA to restrict travel for ZANU (PF) leaders. They urge us to freeze their finances. They suggest we take measures that will inflict pain on the ZANU (PF) leadership. Are these realistic? A few weeks ago South African Ministers visited Zimbabwe for in depth discussions about the crisis. Would the Zimbabwe government have allowed them to enter that country if we had followed the advice of these two fundis? Should follow up meetings on South African soil be necessary, how would the Zimbabwe delegation come to South Africa given the travel restrictions we would have placed on them? Who says that Zimbabweans bank in South Africa in preference to their own country? Plainly Adam and van Zyl Slabbert are asking us to do the sort of thing that will make meaningful dialogue with Zimbabwe impossible.

For some unexplained reason, South Africa is expected to act against its own best interest. The simple facts of the matter are that should the economy of Zimbabwe fall to pieces South Africa's main



trading partner on the African continent would go down the tubes. Should South Africa, following the advice of the opposition parties, withhold electric power from Zimbabwe, the factories in that country would grind to a halt and the urban employed would lose their jobs. Should SASOL withhold oil supplies, the lengthy queues for petrol would, of course, disappear because there would be no petrol in the country. The measures advocated by the opposition will not only hurt the people of Zimbabwe, they will also inflict very drastic harm on South Africa itself.

I doubt that Morgan Tsvangirai and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) would like to inherit a country in such a parlous state.

What then makes sense?

Contrary to the reckless claims of Drs Adam and van Zyl Slabbert, the ANC was in touch with the MDC, at Secretary-General level, even prior to the elections in 2000. Of course our contacts with ZANU (PF) are stronger and are of longer duration. In our contacts with both parties we have emphasised the need for moderation on both sides. We have, of course, been more emphatic in this regard in discussions with ZANU (PF) as the governing party. But we have stressed to the MDC that any escalation of the tensions can only result in an even more intractable situation and could store up even bigger problems for the future. The MDC is also keenly aware that should they become the government, they would be obliged to clean up that mess. Quite rationally they are not as hasty as many South African pundits in advocating irresponsible courses of action.

If Zimbabwe has become a racial issue it is because the political leadership in the opposition parties have chosen to make it so. The ANC first placed the matter on parliament's agenda precisely to avoid such an eventuality. We were measured in our tones and very deliberate in identifying the ill-advised and irresponsible actions of the ZANU (PF) supporters. In the hands of opposition parties eager to scoop up white votes by "scaring the living daylight out of them", as one DA strategist so indelicately put it, it has become a racially polarising issue. The parliamentary record will bear us out.

Adam and van Zyl Slabbert would have done well to recall the hundreds of cases, the most famous of which is that of the Scottsboro boys, framed for rape and convicted by an all-white jury during the 1930s, to put the contrasting black and white responses to the OJ Simpson trial in perspective. The last of the eight Scottsboro youths died in prison a few years ago for a crime he did not commit. If the OJ Simpson trial polarised the USA, the reason is to be sought in that history, and not as the two learned gentlemen speculate, in some attempt to score subconscious points.

At the end of the day it is the people of Zimbabwe who will sort out the mess. The MDC has not asked the ANC to support it against the government of Zimbabwe. It has not asked the ANC to pressure the South African government to impose sanctions. Morgan Tsvangirai explicitly told us they were opposed to sanctions. Feel good posturing and garrulous double-talk that impresses white voters in South Africa will not assist the people of Zimbabwe. Those who are so quick to judge South Africa's "quiet" diplomacy a failure would do well to consider the extent to which the "noisy" diplomacy of London and Washington has succeeded. As far as we know not a single land seizure has been halted and not one life saved by the sound and fury emitted by Bush and Blair. At least the government in Harare is still on talking terms with us.

There are no prizes for guessing which approach is more likely to yield results.

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Letters to the Editorial Collective

The language debate - Balkanisation or one lingua franca?



The time has come for Umrabulo to start a dialogue about the language issue in South Africa. Our Constitution gives equal status and treatment to our 11 official languages. The Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB) was established as a constitutional watchdog with powers to hear complaints.

Since its establishment, PANSALB has found that a number of big companies are contravening the Constitution, by instituting single language policies in their companies. They were instructed to change this policy to be in line with the Constitution, but have ignored this. Even some government departments have come under fire for the same reason. We may soon have this matter before the Constitutional Court. In the light of these events, it is necessary for an in-depth debate takes place about this and related matters.

There are mainly two dominant visions in this debate about language, even though not always explicitly stated as such.

On the one hand, there is the view that English should be built as our public lingua franca. As a result, the other ten languages are demoted to social use, with no significant presence in the public sphere. The rationale for this is threefold:-

- The use of one language - it is argued - is cheaper and more effective than a multi-language policy;
- English is spoken and understood in any case by more South Africans; and
- Through English, South Africans have access to the rest of the world, because it is an international language.

The idea is that a social tendency already in progress at some level, should become official policy.

In direct opposition to this view, some language activists argue that languages can only be protected, within the framework of some form of self-determination for language groups. Self-determination, in this view, can range from the independent Volkstaat (such as Orania); a so-called 'taalstaat' (language state) - i.e. a province with only one official language, and decision making powers over education and cultural matters (but with free access to all citizens); to a chosen representative body for every language community, which should promote the interests of this community throughout the country.

The arguments in favour of this position include:-

- In situations of symbiosis between two or more languages, the language with more 'prestige' (in our case English) usually swamp the others;
- That group rights can only be effectively protected through the devolution of (some) power to those groups; and
- That the legal protection of cultural and language rights along this route is gaining momentum world-wide.

The underlying idea to this argument is that government has a responsibility to erect legal protection against spontaneous social processes that threaten the protection of certain languages.

The biggest problem with both the above points of view is that they both are in direct opposition to the Constitution. The group that argue for multi-lingualism through self-determination are quite open about this, and thus demand amendments to the Constitution. The group supporting a one-language model, either ignores the constitutional provisions or tries to do so, by calling for qualifications to these provisions, getting these provisions relaxed, despite arguments from PANSALB that the constitutional qualifications should not be used as an excuse for a one-language policy.

The weakness of these two dominant paradigms of the language debate is that they are based on wrong premises. In both cases, arguments are forwarded that are secondary or irrelevant to the



fundamental task of the democratic dispensation: including financial or strategic considerations; cultural romanticism, the examples of other countries, and so forth.

What then is the fundamental task of our government? The answer is simple: to protect the freedoms and rights of all its citizens. At the minimum, this means guaranteeing equal opportunities for members of all language and other communities. For government to tolerate or encourage spontaneous social processes - e.g. the growing dominance of English - without asking whether such dominance is based on unequal opportunities, would be to abdicate responsibility as a democratic authority.

For example, the ANC government on the economy does not simply leave everything to the markets, but actively seeks to intervene to ensure more equitable outcomes. However, to arrest social processes in ways that infringe on basic democratic rights (e.g. freedom of association), may constitute a contravention of the moral mandate of a democratic government. People cannot be forced against their will to maintain their own language and/or culture.

In addition, the arguments in favour of the two dominant positions, are not always sustainable:-

- Various studies in the business sector indicate that a multi-lingual policy promotes rather than hampers cost saving and greater productivity. Our various languages are so closely related, that they can easily be understood by people within language groups, e.g. the Nguni languages and the Sotho/Pedi/Tswana language families. The required duplication may not always literally mean 11 translations.
- There are more or less the same number of South Africans that understand Afrikaans as English and there are by far more mother-tongue isiZulu, isiXhosa, Afrikaans and siPedi speakers than mother-tongue English speakers. English is the most geographically limited mother-tongue in the country. It is therefore misleading to argue that most South Africans have a grasp of English. About half of the population know no English, and this comprises mainly the poorer, more marginalised amongst the population.
- It is true that English is a big international language, but to contrast it on this basis with other languages, is unfair. SeTswana, seSotho and SeSwati, as well as other languages related to Tsonga, are used far beyond our borders by fellow Africans. In the African diaspora (Suriname, Dutch Antille) as well as in densely populated European countries such as the Netherlands and Belgium, the Dutch language is spoken. Dutch shares 95% of its language roots with Afrikaans. The additional use of all our language groups can therefore improve South Africa's communications and cooperation with the international community (defined broader than just the English speaking world).
- The fact that policy in some other countries developed in a particular direction, should not be a good reason why we in South Africa should follow suit. Every country is unique and policy options should be judged on merits.

In so far as the tendency towards 'multi-culturalism' in some countries infringes on basic democratic rights, we surely should not even consider following such examples.

What then are the alternatives between the various degrees of 'balkanisation' on the one hand and a one language policy on the other hand? The answer is obvious - multi-lingualism within a unitary state. Under the previous regime, English and Afrikaans enjoyed equal status countrywide in so-called 'white South Africa' - despite the differences in status. The Quebec or Belgium options was not necessary.

Why then can we not accommodate the 11 Official languages of the new South Africa? Central government, government departments, the courts, national companies, government Gazettes, internet providers and so forth must all be obliged to use all 11 languages in their internal and external communications. Furthermore, provincial and municipal authorities must all be made to choose two or more languages used within their jurisdiction as languages for communication. The same should go for the language policy of business.

All universities and technikons in the country must at least be bi-lingual. For each official language there should be at least one university and technikon that provide its full curriculum and administration in that language.

The full school curriculum, including textbooks, should be available in all languages. Mother-tongue instruction in all 11 languages should be available in every province. It should be compulsory for all children, up to Matric, to learn at least three of the official languages. There should be a free television channel and radio station and a national newspaper for every language. Affirmative action should take into consideration not only race and gender, but also language.

It is only then that all citizens will be able to enjoy the same freedom to use their language at all levels of community life and public policy will be so construed as to allow all language groups equal access. This will encourage a national ethos of brotherhood and sisterhood, necessary for the effective functioning of any democracy. We will build our nation when our citizens speak each other's language and share in each other's cultural heritage.

Gerrit Brand
Utrecht University
Netherlands

Unity or merger talks with the Inkatha Freedom Party

The question of unity or merger between the IFP and the ANC is not new in South African politics. Now is the time to have an open and fruitful debate and discussion about whether the time has come for unity or merger talks between these two political parties.

The biggest challenge facing the ANC is the legacy of apartheid. To do this head on, requires a formidable and a united African force. As part of our concerted effort for African Renaissance and unity of Africans there is a dire need to put our house in order and unite all Africans under one umbrella organisation. As the old saying goes: United we stand, divided we fall. I have no doubt in my mind that the divide between the IFP and the ANC constraints advancement to the alleviation of poverty in this country. Are we not doing disservice to our democratic revolution by these divisions? Why talk so loud about African unity with African countries when we are so silent about our own unity in South Africa? I believe that charity begins at home.

Strictly speaking there is no longer major and fundamental policy differences between the IFP and the ANC. This is manifested by the reduction of the level of violence in KwaZulu Natal. Although there are some reports of continued fighting here and there, the war is virtually over.

The ANC needs the IFP and the IFP needs the ANC to achieve the social upliftment of our people and to eradicate poverty. We need each other more importantly to guard jealously against those who want to steal our freedom.

We need to bury the past and move together to a better South Africa and a stronger ANC|IFP Patriotic Front. There are good skills within the IFP that the ANC needs to advance its course. Real politicians would not worry about their positions being threatened when this merger has been realised. This to me seems to be a problem amongst some of our cadres.

I do not want to argue along the lines that the DP and the NNP have merged and therefore we must too. We really do not need a merger for the sake of a merger. The merger between the DP and the NNP came with one thought only, to weaken the ANC support. The merger that we need is dictated by the spirit of the African Renaissance and the defence of our revolutionary gains.



I believe that this quest for unity is speedily gaining momentum. Let's engage in a fruitful organisational debate. I need to be convinced why not a merger now? I know that some of the arguments that we have would be that the IFP wants us to forego our alliance with the SACP. Well this is a matter of a principle, we cannot forego this strategic alliance and I don't think that the IFP is so hard on this one. There has to be some form of a compromise for the sake of country.

I recommend that this should be part of our agenda as we move closer to provincial conferences. Let's talk about it now and not when we are nearer to general elections.

Manase Neo Sefatlhe
Hector Peterson Branch (Orlando West, Soweto)

Local Elections 2000

Your article on Elections 2000 (M. Sachs - Issue 10) was interesting. However, some serious effort would be required to further analyse the results in specific areas, rather than (only) consider the country as a whole. Having stood as a candidate in a 'minority' ward, dominated by the NP, I perhaps have a better perspective of the results than many others.

Of the 2 096 registered black voters in our ward, we must assume that only 26 cast their votes. Or, we must assume that many black voters voted DA!

White voters turned out in force, as indicated by the turnout of 54.9%. The ANC polled 623 (9.5%) votes, an increase of over 85% over the previous local elections. This indicates an increase in white support for the ANC. White voters comprised 80.6% of the registered voters in this ward. The DA polled 89% of the votes cast. The PAC and IFP combined polled 1.5%.

Some observations about the elections in this ward:-

- At one polling station, results indicate that I polled more votes than the ANC on the PR ballots. In other words, supporters voted for the candidate, but not the party.
- During the campaign, many (former) ANC supporters, and many current members, stated that they would not vote as 'nothing has changed.' The message came over strongly from domestic workers and the unemployed. The list process also may have contributed to our losing one of the wards, where our candidate was removed.

We are involved in efforts (through Focused Organising Teams) in the province to make inroads into minority wards, with the directive to 'win the 25 wards lost in the 2000 elections.' Even at this level, we come across a lack of motivation and commitment by those who should be leading by example.

It appears many members are disappointed in the achievements of those elected to represent the ANC. Perhaps Umrabulo could publish in each issue, just what our leaders are achieving, and in this manner informing grassroots supporters that something is happening and change is in fact taking place. Perhaps not as fast as some should prefer, but certainly it is occurring.

Ivor Shepherd,
Alberton

