



## **First National Consultative Conference:**

The Freedom Charter revolutionary programme of the ANC

**26 April 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 for 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.

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### **"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 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.

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### **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 that 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, 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 South Africa of the future will not be a country divided unto itself and dominated by a particular racial group.”*

### **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 that 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.

*Every man and woman in our country shall have the right to vote for and stand as a candidate for all offices and bodies that make laws.*

### **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.

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

### **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 has 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 wellbeing 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 lives of all the people. All other industry and trade that is not monopolistic shall be allowed, with controls to assist the wellbeing 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 works 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 will 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 the land-poor peasants. 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 land 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 forced 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 land shall be open to ownership and use to all people, irrespective of race."*

### **All Shall Be Equal Before the Law!**

In terms of such laws as the notorious Suppression of Communism Act, the Native Administration Act, the Riotous Assemblies Act, the Terrorism and Sabotage Acts, 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 be for serious crimes against the people only, and shall aim at re-education, not vengeance.

It has been a standing policy of white governments in South Africa to prevent Africans and other 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 defeat and destroy the police force, army and other instruments of coercion of the present state. In a democratic South Africa, the army and police force 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 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 that limit 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; the Proclamation of 1963 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; and the Bantu Education Act which makes education without a government permit an offence – surely an offence 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, to 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 a thousand persons a day. These laws control and prohibit movement of our people in the country. There are also laws that 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 all other laws restricting these freedoms shall be abolished.

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### **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 among 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 recognise the right and duty of all to work and to draw full unemployment benefits. Men and women of all races shall receive equal pay for equal work. There shall be a forty-hour working week, a national minimum wage, paid annual leave, 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 organisations. The use of child labour, the housing of male workers in single men's compounds, the system whereby workers on wine farms are paid tots of wine as part payment on their wages, contract labour – all these pernicious practices shall be abolished by a victorious revolutionary government.

*Men and women of all races shall receive equal pay for equal work.*

### **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 Africa 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 unity 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 one single theatre, drama school, ballet school or 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 80 percent of the people of South Africa are by and large confined to patronising the few cinemas whose fare is the most inferior type of American cinema art.

A vigilant censorship system exists to ensure that these racially separate cinemas do not show non-whites anything that is considered to be 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 forms of music, the people are not encouraged or allowed to produce such music as enhances their spirit. Such music as contains protest against conditions of life is searched for and prohibited.

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 the Africans themselves!

The truth is that they wish to preserve those aspects of the African tradition that 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 for 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.

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**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.

Adult illiteracy shall be ended by a mass state education plan. Teachers shall have the rights of other citizens to organise themselves and participate in political life. The colour bar in cultural life, in 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 among the highest in the world, and the life expectancy of Africans among 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 families 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, creches 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 that result in the break-up of families shall be repealed.

*“The Democratic State established after the victory of the revolution shall ensure the right of people to live where they choose.”*

### **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 that respects the rights and sovereignty of nations. South Africa shall strive to maintain world peace and the settlement of international disputes by negotiation – 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 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 for each other's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The economic and cultural interests of those countries which sympathise 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.

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## **First National Consultative Conference:**

Extracts from the Political Report of the National Executive Committee  
**25 April 1969**

The vital and central task of the African National Congress today is the intensification of the armed struggle for the overthrow of the white fascist regime and the liberation of our motherland. Today, armed struggle, together with other forms of struggle, constitutes the weapons of the oppressed in our country against the oppressor.

How can we intensify the revolution? What forms of organisation can ensure the maximum mobilisation of all the resources at our disposal? What are the motive forces of our struggle and their potential? What strategy and tactics are to be employed?

These are some of the problems and questions that require our consideration and solution.

Our struggle is being waged in a complex and difficult national and international situation. The correct solution of the problems of our revolution requires a proper understanding of the international as well as the national situation.

This involves a correct assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the enemy and its imperialist allies, as well as our own strengths and weaknesses, our potential and that of the whole anti-imperialist forces.

### **Our Immediate Enemies**

Our immediate enemies, the white fascist regime in South Africa, are an important and integral part of the imperialist camp. Internationally, the imperialists' main preoccupation today is a desperate attempt to stem the anti-colonialist movement, and to regain their former positions of political, economic and military dominance over the peoples of the world. To achieve their objective, they have embarked upon a global strategy of reactionary and brutal counterattack against progressive governments and revolutionary liberatory movements.

The imperialists resort to numerous methods, for instance:

- The creation of hotbeds of war all over the world, including acts of provocation as well as direct and indirect military intervention as in Vietnam and South East Asia, the Middle East, Korea, Cuba, West Berlin and Czechoslovakia.

- The establishment of military bases at strategic points and the selection of springboards in all continents from which they launch their acts of aggression and subversion. In the Middle East, Israel acts as the cat's paw of imperialism; in Asia, it is Japan. In Africa, fascist South Africa is the main bulwark and fortress of reaction and imperialism. It is of vital economic and strategic value in the whole global strategy of imperialism.

*“In Africa, fascist South Africa is the main bulwark and fortress of reaction and imperialism.”*

### **The subversion of anti-imperialist governments**

Military coups in Latin America and Africa have been engineered systematically in the last three years.

The hindering of progress towards economic independence in developing countries through neo-colonialist machination, carefully manipulated "aid" and loans, the fixing of prices of commodities to the disadvantage of developing countries, the unequal trade agreements, the export of both private and state capital – all these are designed to keep independent and developing countries economically dependent on the colonialists.

South African fascism itself has reached a stage where it is offering state financial "aid" to African independent states. It is already implementing the scheme in Swaziland, Lesotho, Malawi and Botswana. These are all part of a sinister plot to blackmail states not to support liberation struggles, as Banda of Malawi and Leabua Jonathan of Lesotho have already done.

There is increased support and reinforcement of reactionary regimes, militarily, economically and technically, against the liberation movements and revolution. The concerted support by the imperialists of the racist minority regimes of Vorster, Caetano and Smith against the ANC, ZAPU, MPLA, FRELIMO, SWAPO and PAIGC is now a public and well-known fact.

In Latin America and Asia, too, the United States in particular supports its puppet regimes against revolutionary movements.

Assassination and the murder of leading members of progressive and revolutionary movements has now become part of the stock-in-trade of world reactionary forces. In Kenya a few years back it was Pio Pinto. Then, Comrade Sigauke of FRELIMO, now recently Comrade Eduardo Mondlane of FRELIMO. There are no limits to the cowardly and dastardly crimes of the imperialists and their agents.

Imperialist agents are busy trying to foment division, conflict and desertions in the ranks of the liberation movements and progressive organisations. The agents of reaction use all methods, ranging from the exploitation of genuine grievances and differences to naked slander, distortions, lies and bribery.

Efforts to discredit and denigrate the liberation movements and their leadership, both among the people and internationally, are one of the main objects of the psychological warfare conducted through the radio, press and whispering campaigns. The work of Radio RSA, Radio Bantu and Msakazo are notorious in this respect.

The creation and maintenance of spurious stooge organisations is one of the main preoccupations of the imperialists – PAC, and the New Revolutionary Movement in South Africa, ZANU in Zimbabwe, COREMO in Mozambique, Savimbi and Roberto Holden's so-called organisations in Angola.

Spies, informers and traitors are lavishly bribed to inform on the liberation movements, to enable the oppressors to wreck the revolutionary struggles for freedom.

The objective of the imperialists in their global strategy is to isolate, undermine, subvert and wreck everything – whether it be a state or organisation that is progressive and anti-imperialist – and to consolidate and reconstruct all pro-imperialists and reactionary institutions in the world.

*The objective of the imperialists in their global strategy is to isolate, undermine, subvert and wreck everything.*

### **The Mighty Anti-Imperialist Force**

Opposed to this frantic counteroffensive is the mighty anti-imperialist force and movements. It is the united force of popular, progressive and revolutionary states and organisations.

The apparent strength of the imperialists is in their massive military and economic potential. Politically, they are weak and getting weaker by the day. They are incapable of complete unity even among themselves because of the constant rivalry to re-divide markets. In addition, the rise of anti-imperialist revolution is constantly undermining the false image of their superiority. Even militarily, their "invincibility" is being exposed by the humiliating defeats they are suffering from smaller and relatively weaker nations, which are economically less developed.

The dilemma of the United States in Vietnam caused by the shattering and humiliating blows from the heroic people of Vietnam exposed the basic weakness of the leading and most aggressive imperialist powers.

In addition, developing countries no longer wish to associate themselves openly with the capitalist system, which to the vast masses of the people spells ignorance, disease and poverty. The impact of socialism on the masses of the people is in steering states of the third world to pronounce their objectives as socialist in one form or the other.

Mass support and even submission is shrinking in the direction of resistance and revolt, both in the former colonial countries and amongst vast sections of the populations in the imperialist

countries themselves. The anti-communist bogey through which the imperialists try to justify all their reckless and brutal interference is wearing thin as a veil to hide their fiendish plots of plunder, greed, exploitation, aggression and atrocities, which they perpetrate against the peoples of the world.

### **The Capitalist World Shrinks**

As the capitalist world begins to shrink, the rivalry between the imperialists for markets and dominance increases and so do their differences and conflicts.

Military and economic organisations like NATO, CENTO, SEATO, the OAS and the Common Market, which were set up to protect shaky imperialists economically and militarily, become insecure and are in a constant state of crisis. The domination of her partners by the United States is being challenged.

The prestige of the imperialists and especially that of their leader – the United States – is dwindling. Throughout the world, criticism of their complete disregard for human rights and their support for fascist and racist states like South Africa, Portugal and West Germany is mounting and becoming more caustic. Economic crisis is seriously aggravating their position at home and abroad.

The imperialists appear strong, formidable and sometimes even invincible, but in fact, they are growing weaker and weaker as the socialist community grows stronger and liberation movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America struggle more fiercely for independence; and the masses in the imperialist countries themselves challenge the policies of the rulers.

Apart from inherent causes leading to division amongst the imperialists, one major factor that has contributed to the crisis in which imperialism has found itself is the growing might of the anti-imperialist movement.

*The imperialists appear strong, formidable and sometimes even invincible, but in fact, they are growing weaker and weaker.*

### **The Anti-Imperialist Movement: Its Strength, Weaknesses and Potential**

The anti-imperialist movement is the united struggle and effort of all anti-imperialist states, organisations and individuals throughout the world. It is a broad movement composed of people with different political beliefs, of different races and colours, from different walks of life – but who are united by their hatred of the evils of imperialism and racialism and their firm belief in national independence, genuine democracy, race harmony and peace.

The pillars of the anti-imperialist movement are the Soviet Union, the socialist states in alliance with the progressive states of Africa, Asia and Latin America, the revolutionary liberation

movements in countries which are still under colonial or white minority rule, and the democratic forces in the imperialist countries themselves.

The anti-imperialist movement is based on the fact that the destinies of all peoples struggling against imperialism are interlinked and inextricably interwoven. The joint and concerted action of all progressive forces against imperialism and the mobilisation of the vast masses of the people into a united anti-imperialist front constitutes a mighty and invincible force for the destruction of the imperialists. Unity and action are therefore cardinal in the fulfilment of this objective.

The African National Congress and the oppressed and exploited peoples of South Africa, together with all genuine democrats, are an integral part of the anti-imperialist movement of the world. We share with all other anti-imperialist peoples of the world common aims and objectives and common enemies.

There are numerous international organisations whose basic object is the mobilisation of the people against imperialism, like OAU, WFTU, WIDF, WFDY, IUS, the World Peace Council, the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation, the Afro-Asian-Latin American Solidarity Organisation, the Association of Democratic Jurists, the Afro-Asian Writers Association, AATUF, the Pan African Youth Movement, the African Women's Conference, and others.

The African National Congress has and still participates as fully as it can in the activities of these bodies and in many instances serves on their executive bodies. Apart from the bitter struggle of the people in South Africa against the fascists and imperialists, this has been a significant contribution to the global anti-imperialist struggle.

*"It is impossible, if not fatal, to divorce the struggle of our people in South Africa from the struggle of the peoples of the world."*

It is impossible, if not fatal, to divorce the struggle of our people in South Africa from the struggle of the peoples of the world. Is the participation of the African National Congress in these international bodies useless and wasteful? Certainly not. Not only do we join the powerful mass of mankind fighting the same enemies, but we are able to disseminate information about our struggle, thereby winning and strengthening ourselves and our allies and obtaining both moral and material support for our struggle.

The international support for our struggle against the South African fascists has been mounting. But misconceptions and even ignorance of the conditions in our country and the struggle are still there in the most unexpected quarters. This is sometimes due to the fact that the enemy and its allies are busy, through a well-organised internationally pro-apartheid lobby, distorting and lying about the situation in the country.

It is of course correct that action inside our country is a more positive and dynamic contribution towards the struggle against imperialism. But the action itself and constant international explanation and agitation must go hand in hand. It is not necessary to go into details of how the so-called "Mau-Mau" struggle was slandered and isolated by the British to the extent that it was not understood and not effectively supported by the international progressive world for lack of proper publicity. Much harm resulted from this circumstance. Karl Marx's call – "Workers of the World Unite" – is equally applicable to the anti-imperialists at this grave and critical time: "Anti-imperialists of the World Unite!"

### **The Offensive of the National Liberation Movement and the Anti-Imperialist Forces**

The past decade has been an era of national revolution and upsurge of anti-imperialism, which has resulted in the most rapid and unprecedented disintegration of colonialism in its old form. The frontiers of imperialism have shrunk under the pounding blows of the offensive launched by the liberation movements throughout the world.

Within a period of less than ten years, the number of independent African states has reached 41. The phenomenal victory by the national liberation movements over the imperialists was made possible by a number of factors.

- Firstly, a fundamental change in the world situation was brought about by the steadily growing strength of socialist countries, which are selflessly dedicated towards the struggle for the destruction of colonialism.
- Secondly, militant and determined liberation movements have been growing in the colonial countries.
- Thirdly, systematic and conscientious efforts have been made by all anti-imperialist forces throughout the world to forge unity and to pool their resources against colonialism.
- Fourthly, the inherent greed of the imperialists has produced conflicts within their own ranks, which have resulted in manoeuvres and counter-manoevres against each other.
- Finally, each imperialist country has been weakened by crisis and internal problems within its own state, and the vigorous onslaught of working-class and other democratic movements.

The victories of the liberation movements, particularly in Africa, whether they were achieved by peaceful or violent means, have been a source of great inspiration to millions of oppressed people and have given impetus and momentum to their dream, which almost immediately became a reality.

*“Millions of oppressed people have given impetus and momentum to their dream.”*

The growth of regional, continental and international anti-imperialist organisations and the numerous acts of solidarity amongst the anti-imperialist people have become a life belt to those who are still battling in the storm against the racialists, colonialists and fascists.

One of the great achievements of this era has been that colonialism as an ideology has been outlawed internationally and the people have discovered their immense strength to assault it successfully. The myth and facade of the invincibility of the racialists, colonialists, imperialists have been disproved forever.

The victories of the national liberation movements were in most cases not easy, smooth and complete, nor was the retreat of the imperialists always unplanned or a complete defeat. Imperialism resorted to many political, military, economic and other stratagems to extend its lease of life and to save as much as it could in its erstwhile colonies.

In parts of the world like southern Africa and Guinea-Bissau, the imperialists are continuing to resist the legitimate demands of the people through ruthless repressions and terrorism. This is no accident, but a deliberate design by the imperialists to maintain these areas as their last frontiers, as bastions of colonialism and as a springboard for re-colonisation.

*“The myth and facade of the invincibility of the racialists, colonialists, imperialists have been disproved forever.”*

### **Counter-Offensive by the Imperialists**

Imperialists have never approved the abolition of colonialism and the oppression and exploitation of the people. They were forced out of their former colonies by the strength of the people. They tried to cover their retreat by making loud announcements that they were "granting the people their independence". This was a despicable lie. It is only through the courageous struggles and sacrifices of the people that they have won their freedom.

The disintegration and collapse of colonialism, and the growth and unity of the anti-imperialist forces, have driven the imperialists to desperation, which has led them to launch a sinister and vigorous counteroffensive against the newly independent states, the national liberation movements and the anti-imperialist organisations.

This counteroffensive is yielding to spectacular victories for the imperialists, and temporary and serious reverses for the African revolution, as well as dangerous cracks in the unity of the anti-

imperialist forces of the world. The initiative that had been so firmly held by the anti-imperialist forces of the world is in grave danger due to this counteroffensive of the imperialists.

It is true that the initiative has not been lost yet. But within the space of two years, the imperialists have done sufficient damage to independent states, liberation movements and anti-imperialist organisations to shake us out of our complacency and to call for greater vigilance and a closer study of the methods of the imperialists.

The victories of the imperialists and the reverses of the revolutionary anti-imperialist forces are undoubtedly a temporary phenomenon. That is a fundamental fact derived from an understanding of the character of the epoch in which we live. However, comforting as this fact may be in the long run, it is no solution to the grave problems which now face us. Nor is it an effective answer to the grim counteroffensive which is causing so much suffering to millions of people.

The real solution can only be found by an exhaustive and candid examination of the strength and weaknesses, mistakes and faults as well as the potential of the anti-imperialist forces on the one hand; and on the other, the strategy and tactics of the imperialists which have enabled them to exploit these weaknesses and mistakes to score the victories they have recently scored.

The bold and aggressive counteroffensive of the colonialists has been timed to take place at a time when there is discord in the anti-imperialist forces of the world both nationally and internationally. In many instances, as in the newly independent states, the colonialists have cunningly contrived to create internal problems through political and economic intrigues, and bribery and subversion, in order to undermine the independence of these states and retain political and economic control over them.

### **Discord in the Anti-Imperialist Forces**

One of the greatest tragedies of our time has been the discord in the socialist camp, which has weakened the main shield of the peoples against imperialism. This division has reflected itself in all international anti-imperialist organisations. Those of the youth, students, women, trade unions and even in organisations like the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation.

The potency and effectiveness of these bodies have been unfortunately reduced at a critical time. So much precious time is spent by certain sections in reckless and disruptive activities, whereas the positive contribution by these anti-imperialist organisations is invaluable. This discord has had the effect of dividing newly independent states, socialist countries and national liberation and democratic movements.

The knowledge of the discord and disagreement that exist among the anti-imperialist forces has spurred the imperialists to strike left and right in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Some of the strength of the anti-imperialist movement is being tragically wasted on internal disputes, whilst the enemy continues to strike with ever-growing audacity. Solidarity, that powerful weapon, is being corroded. In some instances, corrupt methods have been resorted to in order to win support. Those organisations which maintain their independence, and which refuse to yield to pressure, become objects of vilification and abuse. On the other hand, charlatans and political careerists and renegades of all kinds, whose reputation cannot stand examination by daylight, are being frantically recruited and exalted as revolutionaries and true representatives of the people despite the fact that the contrary is well known. There have been attempts to establish organisations that were merely factions or cliques.

*“Solidarity, that powerful weapon, is being corroded.”*

This is a serious situation. So long as it exists, so long will the imperialists bolster their courage and engage in bolder and more aggressive acts against the people.

Imperialist military intervention and aggression in Vietnam, the Dominican Republic, and the Congo, the numerous counterrevolutionary coups and all forms of subversion to restore the domination of the colonialists, have succeeded particularly because of the discord which exists in the anti-imperialist forces. The forums of the anti-imperialist organisations are not platforms for ideological and interstate disputes but are an anvil where all anti-imperialists should try to forge their common weapon to fight imperialism. Difficulties there might well be between members of the anti-imperialist movement, but these must never be made to appear more important than the historic and common duty of destroying the monster of colonialism in all its forms.

The anti-imperialist forces have scored numerous victories and their potential in unity and concerted action is boundless. It is therefore the solemn duty of all genuine anti-imperialists to strengthen the unity of this mighty force, and to make it as invincible as it should be. Those who continue to sow discord and confusion are consciously and unconsciously trying to divert the movement from its objectives and are assisting the imperialists and undermining the revolutionary struggle.

For reasons which we will show later, the African National Congress is deeply interested in the unity of the anti-imperialist movement. The success of the struggle in South Africa, its duration and cost in human life, depends to a great extent upon the solidarity, strength and unity of the anti-imperialist forces of the world.

*“The African National Congress is deeply interested in the unity of the anti-imperialist movement.”*

As we have stated before, imperialism and fascism are using South Africa as their base and springboard for launching a counter-revolutionary offensive in Africa. The aggressive nature of

these forces constitutes a direct threat to peace and independence not only in Africa but also in the rest of the world.

In this situation, and as an internationalist duty, it is crucial that progressive forces the world over should realise that they constitute one of the main motive forces in wiping out imperialism and fascism in South Africa. That realisation must be translated into action in support of the national liberation movement in South Africa, as led by the ANC.

The duty of the anti-imperialist forces that stand against Vorster fascism is no less today than the duty that faced the progressive forces against Hitler's Nazism during World War II.

From the progressive point of view, there must be a fundamental change of outlook and attitude towards the struggle against fascism in South Africa.

The anti-imperialist movement has tremendous potential. The urgent and immediate need is to cement unity. There is need to work out and implement the global strategy to counter the imperialists, to examine the activities of the numerous components, to ensure greater coordination and an avoidance of duplication. Above all, aggressive imperialist counterattack requires a bolder assault by the anti-imperialist forces along every front.

### **The African Revolution: Its Strength, Weaknesses and Potentialities**

The African revolution has had a tremendous impact on the world. It has swept aside the hollow myth of white rule based on alleged superiority of the white over the black. In the world forums, the rapid appearance of African states has tilted the balance against the former imperialist states.

In the independent states themselves, massive funds have been allocated for the first time to secure proper education and health facilities for the people. Africanisation of the civil services is proceeding apace. The beginnings of economic development have been laid. The power of the African states is being steadily built up in all spheres of human endeavour.

Yet it should be remembered that the states of Africa start their independent existence with a terrible legacy of colonial rule, which deliberately kept the people ignorant, disease-ridden and poor. Furthermore, the imperialists never intended to abandon their interests. Therefore, through their agents, they continue to do everything to place difficulties in the way of African unity and advancement.

The Organisation of African Unity is one of the most hopeful symbols of African aspirations and determination to carve a proper place for our continent in the world. As far as we of the African National Congress are concerned, the achievements of the organisation both in terms of its contribution to the solution of interstate problems and its support of the anti-imperialist struggle have been great.

This is not to say that there are no weaknesses in the OAU or in some of the states composing this great organisation. But on the whole, it can be said that our struggle, in common with that of many other countries, has received solid support from the OAU. It would perhaps be regarded as invidious to single out the states that have given us help and would be tedious to list them all. Yet we cannot but place on record our appreciation of Zambia, Tanzania, UAR and Algeria, who have been our mainstay through many a difficulty.

It is not realistic for us to expect that every country in Africa must do the same or give equally to the struggle against the bastion of reaction in southern Africa. The states of white supremacy are strong and are backed by powerful international forces. But in the long run, the anti-imperialist and anti-racist forces in Africa will rally to our support.

*“The power of the African states is being steadily built up in all spheres of human endeavour.”*

### **Southern Africa**

The situation in southern Africa is a menace to African security and an imminent and serious threat to world peace. This has sometimes been expressed, but it has perhaps never been so vital as now, to make the point again and again, and to examine the full implications and the consequences that flow from it.

The white minority and fascist regimes in southern Africa have maintained, through military force and police terrorism, systems that have been condemned the world over as a crime against humanity. Nevertheless, in flagrant violation of world condemnation, these racialist regimes have intensified their ruthless oppression and exploitation of the people.

There are many reasons why these white regimes have been able to sustain and maintain systems that are against the general trend of the African revolution and world development.

One of them is that Smith, Vorster and Caetano have systematically built and consolidated what is now known to be the Unholy Alliance. It is an alliance based on common ideology – the maintenance of colonialism, racism and fascism. It has a common economic objective – the exploitation of the peoples of southern Africa and their resources. It also has a common political and military objective – to stem the spread of the African revolution and to subvert it where it has already been successful.

The South African forces are conducting military action jointly with the Portuguese against MPLA in Angola. Last year, it was established that South African helicopters were operating against MPLA militants in their eastern front. For the purposes of working out joint strategy, the Portuguese Commander-in-Chief and the South African Commandant-General meet at least once a month.

Military support and contingents of South African troops in Mozambique have been the subject of frequent reports. The question of South African troops in Zimbabwe is notorious enough.

*“In flagrant violation of world condemnation, these racist regimes have intensified their ruthless oppression and exploitation of the people.”*

### **The Role of South Africa in the Unholy Alliance**

South Africa is the main pillar of this alliance; with its tremendous economic resources and its military might, which is out of all proportion for its needs, it stands out as the senior partner and gives technical, financial and military aid to the Smith regime, Caetano in Mozambique, and Angola. Smith openly declared to the Congress of his party last year that but for the assurance of South African support, he would not have declared UDI.

The South African regime has acquired all the aggressive features of an imperialist state. It is only necessary to mention the brazen annexation of South West Africa against decisions of the United Nations; the constant threats of military attacks on Zambia and Tanzania; the acts of subversion, sabotage and spying carried on in African States; and the export of mercenaries – these are all signs of her expansionist policy.

Behind this Unholy Alliance is an even more dangerous alliance of the imperialists – the United States, Britain, France, West Germany, Japan, etc. They have deliberately tried to build southern Africa, and South Africa in particular, into a fortress of racialism and colonialism, the last outpost of imperialism in Africa and a ready springboard to endanger the sovereignty of African states and threaten world peace.

South Africa is the treasure house of the imperialists, but more than that, it is one of their most important strategic military bases and ally in their global strategy directed against the forces of national liberation, democracy and peace.

The enormous military might of South Africa has been built with the direct assistance of the imperialist powers. They supplied the technical know-how, the materials and the manpower to accelerate the growth of that monstrous arsenal in South Africa. This was part of a well-considered strategy.

The Minister of Defence of the white minority regime in South Africa has stated openly that the role of South Africa in Africa is the same as the role of the United States in the world and that was to fight what he called communism.

The commitment and involvement of South Africa in the global strategy of the imperialists is no new phenomenon. In the historic patriotic war of the People’s Republic of Korea, South Africa did not hesitate to send its military personnel there to fight against the people of Korea. Only recently

in the Middle East war, so-called South African volunteers were mobilised to render aid to Israel. Financial support was also given. The South African government boasts that it is the most "stable" ally of the imperialist powers and offers them ready passage via the Cape to prosecute their nefarious plots and war in South East Asia.

*"South Africa is the treasure house of the imperialists, but more than that ... it is an ally in their global strategy directed against the forces of national liberation, democracy and peace."*

### **South Africa – Zimbabwe – Britain**

Britain is involved in one of the most despicable acts of treachery against the African people of Zimbabwe. The British Labour government has permitted and encouraged the white minority to seize and monopolise political power despite British assurances that there will be no independence before African majority rule (NIBMAR).

Smith has now introduced a fascist constitution, which is intended to relegate the majority to the dust bin. Despite worldwide popular demand, and in spite of the fact that Wilson himself declared UDI an act of rebellion by Smith and his racist henchmen, the British government has consistently refused to use force to restore order in Rhodesia. Britain has deliberately resorted to all forms of ineffectual methods, numerous and worthless talks, and cunningly manipulated sanctions, which allow the Smith regime to get its wants through the back door – South Africa.

Both the South African regime and Britain are vitally interested in retaining Rhodesia as a buffer state, forming part of a reactionary iron-belt barrier with South West Africa in the west, Angola in the northwest and Mozambique on the east to protect the imperialist treasure house, South Africa, from any outside attack.

When the guerrilla activities started in Zimbabwe under the leadership of the ZAPU/ANC alliance, South Africa without hesitation sent thousands of troops and a vast quantity of military equipment to the rescue of Smith's weaker forces. The basic purpose was to protect the buffer from collapsing and to keep guerrilla onslaught as far as possible from the borders of South Africa.

Everything is being done to make sure that South Africa itself did not become a theatre of war. The imperialists are aware of the hatred of the people of South Africa towards imperialism and guerrilla war there might spell the end sooner than bargained for. If Rhodesia fell to the liberatory forces, the people of South Africa would have a friendly border on their side and this would qualitatively change the situation in favour of the liberation movement in South Africa.

In pouring their forces into Rhodesia, the Vorster regime was trying to solve one problem, but it has in fact created numerous others. One of them was what is, and will be for a long time, the bane of South African military strategists. This is the fact that by undertaking the defence of

southern Africa, the fascist regime is giving its military force an impossible task, drawing them out of their base and creating a long line of defence over a wide area. But on the other hand, to fail to do this will be to allow the liberation forces in the neighbouring countries to achieve victory.

The heavy casualties inflicted by our forces came as a shock and had an adverse effect both on the morale of the so-called "superior" white forces and on the white population in South Africa. This is part of the reason why Vorster is urging a settlement between Britain and Rhodesia at all costs. The burden of defending Rhodesia is creating problems and difficulties for the South African regime.

For us, the main strategic question is to see that the guerrilla struggle spreads to South Africa itself. When that happens, the dispersal of the enemy will in strategic terms be complete. This is not to say that the enemy will in fact be tactically dispersed. This depends on how widespread and effective guerrilla war is throughout southern Africa. But, clearly, we need to disperse the forces of white supremacy throughout the region, both in territorial terms and in numbers of engagements. For this, we need to launch the struggle at home.

Intensification of the struggle in Zimbabwe is an important part of our aim.

*"We need to disperse the forces of white supremacy throughout the region."*

### **The ZAPU/ANC Alliance**

The alliance of ZAPU/ANC has not sprung out of the blue. It is founded on a belief in a united struggle, a belief shared by all the people of Africa and expressed by decades of close cooperation between both the leaders and rank-and-file of the political movement in South Africa and Zimbabwe. In fact, when the ANC was formed in 1912, it was founded as the national movement for South Africa, the then protectorates, and Rhodesia. All these countries were under British domination.

It was only in 1924 that a separate ANC of Rhodesia was formed. But coordination continued, and later, in the fifties, was strengthened as the policies in Rhodesia and South Africa became virtually identical. The same repressive laws were passed in the parliaments of both countries. When the ANC of Rhodesia was banned, the ANC (of South Africa) was also banned in Rhodesia. In fact, the ANC (SA) was banned in Rhodesia before it was banned in South Africa itself. Many of the laws in Zimbabwe are carbon copies of laws passed in South Africa. The legal system is the same.

It is vital to concentrate on the main essence of the question relating to the ZAPU/ANC alliance. A unique form of alliance has been formed between two liberation movements for the purpose of fighting imperialism, racism and oppression. The purpose is to fight effectively in unity. The fact

that our enemies are acting in a united and coordinated fashion only lends point to the ZAPU/ANC alliance.

It is true that some legitimate questions can be asked as to the scale and the scope of the alliance, and whether it could lead to a lack of attention to that which is specific and different in the situations of the two countries. We consider that these questions have received proper attention by the leadership of ZAPU and the ANC in the course of protracted analysis. There can be absolutely no doubt that honest revolutionaries will seek to build still greater unity and effectiveness among the people of Zimbabwe and South Africa.

The alliance has come to stay.

*“A unique form of alliance has been formed between two liberation movements for the purpose of fighting imperialism, racism and oppression.”*

### **Some Conclusions**

The situation in southern Africa demonstrates:

1. The correctness of the ZAPU/ANC alliance, and the need to do everything possible to consolidate this alliance.
  2. The urgent need (long overdue) of establishing a properly organised alliance between ANC/ZAPU, FRELIMO/MPLA and SWAPO.
  3. The concept of the Unholy Alliance, which regards the whole of South Africa as an indivisible theatre of war. Basically, this should be the outlook of the liberation movement, but in addition to this general view, every effort should be made to kindle the fire of armed struggle in as many areas as possible and in particular in South Africa.
  4. The struggle in South Africa is going to be protracted and difficult and the movement should gear itself for bitter hardships which lie ahead.
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## **First National Consultative Conference:**

Report on the Strategy and Tactics of the African National Congress

**26 April 1969**

The struggle of the oppressed people of South Africa is taking place within an international context of transition to the socialist system, of the breakdown of the colonial system as a result of national liberation and socialist revolutions, and the fight for social and economic progress by the people of the whole world.

We in South Africa are part of the zone in which national liberation is the chief content of the struggle. On our continent, sweeping advances have been registered that have resulted in the emergence to independent statehood of 41 states. Thus, the first formal step of independence has been largely won in Africa and this fact exercises a big influence on the developments in our country.

The countries of southern Africa have not as yet broken the chains of colonialism and racism which hold them in oppression. In Mozambique, Angola, South West Africa, Zimbabwe and South Africa, white racist and fascist regimes maintain systems that go against the current trend of the African revolution and world development.

This has been made possible by the tremendous economic and military power at the disposal of these regimes, built with the help of imperialism.

The main pillar of the Unholy Alliance of Portugal, Rhodesia and South Africa is the Republic of South Africa. The strategy and tactics of our revolution require for their formulation and understanding a full appreciation of the interlocking and interweaving of international, African and southern African developments that play on our situation.

### **Rule by Force**

South Africa was conquered by force and is today ruled by force. At moments when white autocracy feels itself threatened, it does not hesitate to use the gun.

When the gun is not in use, legal and administrative terror, fear, social and economic pressures, complacency and confusion generated by propaganda and "education", are the devices brought into play in an attempt to harness the people's opposition. Behind these devices hovers force.

Whether in reserve or in actual employment, force is ever-present, and this has been so since the white man came to Africa.

*"South Africa was conquered by force and is today ruled by force."*

## **Unending Resistance to White Domination**

From the time alien rule was imposed, there has been, historically speaking, unbroken resistance to this domination. It has taken different forms at different times, but it has never been abandoned.

For the first 250 years, there were regular armed clashes, battles and wars. The superior material resources of the enemy, the divided and often fragmented nature of the resistance, the unchallenged ascendancy of imperialism as a world system up to the beginning of the twentieth century, the historically understandable absence of political cohesion and leadership in the people's camp – these and other factors combined to end the first phase of resistance against alien domination.

However, the protracted character of this resistance, unequalled anywhere else in Africa, is underlined by the fact that the armed subjugation of the indigenous people was only really accomplished by the beginning of this century. The defeat of the Bambata Rebellion in 1906 marked the end of this first phase and set the stage for the handing over of the administration of the country to local whites in 1910.

The 50 years that followed were not a period of resignation or of acceptance. It was a period of development and of regrouping under new conditions; a period in which newly created political formations of the people continued to struggle with the enemy and grew into maturity; a period in which, above all, national consciousness began to assert itself against tribal sectionalism.

This period witnessed the emergence and development of the primary organisation of the liberation movement – the African National Congress. It also saw the evolution of national organisations reflecting the aspirations of other oppressed non-white groups (the Coloureds and the Indians) and the creation of economic and political organisations – the South African Communist Party and trade unions that reflected the special aims and aspirations of the newly developed and doubly exploited working class.

This was a period of organisational growth. It was punctuated by struggles involving techniques ranging from orthodox mass campaigning to general strikes, to mass acts of defiance. It culminated in the decision taken in 1961 to prepare for armed confrontation. December 1961 saw the opening stages of this campaign in the simultaneous acts of sabotage that occurred in most of the main urban centres on the 16th.

*“From the time alien rule was imposed, there has been unbroken resistance to this domination.”*

## **The Move to Armed Struggle**

Why was the decision for armed struggle taken in 1961? Why not 1951 or 1941 or 1931? Is it that the character of the state had altered so fundamentally that only in 1961 did armed struggle become the only alternative?

Not at all. There has never been a moment in the history of South Africa since 1652 in which the white ruling class would have given privileges without a physical battle. Why then did organisations like the African National Congress not call for armed struggle? Was it perhaps that they were not really revolutionary or that it was only in the early 1960s that they began to appreciate the correct strategy? Is there perhaps substance in the accusations by some of our detractors that until the early 60s the liberation movement was lacking in military fervour and the desire for radical change? In other words, was its policy not a revolutionary one? What is our measuring rod for revolutionary policy?

A look at this concept will help towards a more profound understanding not only of the past but of the future. It is therefore not out of place to devote a word to it.

In essence, a revolutionary policy is one that holds out the quickest and most fundamental transformation and transfer of power from one class to another. In real life, such radical changes are brought about not by imaginary forces but by those whose outlook and readiness to act is very much influenced by historically determined factors.

To ignore the real situation and to play about with imaginary forces, concepts and ideals is to invite failure. The art of revolutionary leadership consists in providing leadership to the masses and not just to its most advanced elements; it consists of setting a pace that accords with objective conditions and the real possibilities at hand.

The revolutionary-sounding phrase does not always reflect revolutionary policy, and revolutionary-sounding policy is not always the springboard for revolutionary advance. Indeed, what appears to be "militant" and "revolutionary" can often be counter-revolutionary. It is surely a question of whether, in the given concrete situation, the course or policy advocated will aid or impede the prospects of the conquest of power. In this, the only test, the advocacy of armed struggle can, in some situations, be as counter-revolutionary as the advocacy of its opposite in other situations.

Untimely, ill-planned or premature manifestations of violence impede and do not advance the prospect for revolutionary change and are clearly counter-revolutionary. It is obvious therefore that policy and organisational structures must grow out of the real situation if they are not to become meaningless clichés.

*“There has never been a moment in the history of South Africa since 1652 in which the white ruling class would have given privileges without a physical battle.”*

### **Conditions for Armed Struggle**

Future historians may well be able to pause at some moments during the evolution of our struggle and examine critically both its pace and emphasis. But, in general, without the so-called reformist activities of the previous half-century, the prospect of advancing into the new phase would have been extremely small.

This is so because even in the typical colonial-type situation, armed struggle becomes feasible only if:

- there is disillusionment with the prospect of achieving liberation by traditional peaceful processes because the objective conditions blatantly bar the way to change;
- there is readiness to respond to the strategy of armed struggle with all the enormous sacrifices which this involves;
- there is in existence a political leadership capable of gaining the organised allegiance of the people for armed struggle and which has both the experience and the ability to carry out the painstaking process of planning, preparation and overall conduct of the operations;
- and there exist favourable objective conditions in the international and local planes.

In one sense, conditions are connected and interdependent. They are not created by subjective and ideological activity only and many are the mistakes committed by heroic revolutionaries who give a monopoly to the subjective factor and who confuse their own readiness with the readiness of others.

These conditions are brought about not only by developing political, economic and social conditions, but also by the long hard grind of revolutionary work. They depend on such factors as the response of the enemy, the extent to which he unmasks himself and the experience gained by the people themselves, not in academic seminars but in actual political struggle.

We reject the approach which sees as the catalyst for revolutionary transformation only the short-cut of isolated confrontations and the creation of armed resistance centres. Does this mean that before an actual beginning can be made to the armed challenge, we have to wait for the evolvment of some sort of deep crisis in the enemy camp which is serious enough to hold out the possibility of an immediate all-round insurrection? Certainly not!

We believe that given certain basic factors, both international and local, the actual beginning of armed struggle or guerrilla warfare can be made, and having begun, can steadily develop conditions for the future all-out war that would eventually lead to the conquest of power.

Under the modern highly sophisticated police state (which South Africa is), it is questionable whether a movement can succeed in a programme of mass political organisation beyond a certain point without starting a new type of action. Also, it is not easy to determine the point at which sufficient concrete political and organisational preparations have been carried out to give our armed detachments the maximum chances of survival and growth within any given area. There is no instrument for measuring this. But we must not overdo the importance of the subjective factor, and before embarking upon a path which is in one sense tragic, although historically inevitable and necessary, certain of the basic minimum conditions already mentioned must be present and certain minimum preparations must have been made.

### **Tempered in struggle**

In light of those considerations, it is clear that it was only after the victory of the anti-imperialist forces in World War II, and the tide of independence in Africa, Asia and Latin America, combined with the zigzags of struggle inside South Africa in the last 50 years, which by the beginning of the 1960s demanded a move in the direction of armed struggle.

The 1950s were among the most stirring and struggle-filled decades in the history of the liberation movement. Thousands upon thousands of militant cadres were tempered during this period and masses of our people both in town and countryside participated in a variety of forms of struggle. The moulding of mass political consciousness reached a new intensity.

The response of the authorities was such that the overwhelming majority of the people learnt, through their own participation in the struggle and confrontation with the state, that in the long run the privileges of the minority will only be wrenched from it by a reversion to armed combat. Indeed, during this "peaceful" stage in our struggle hardly a year passed without massacres of our people by the army and police.

Each phase in the unfolding of the struggle of the 1950s played a part in setting the stage of our new approach. A rebirth of the spirit of deliberate defiance of the white man's law was stimulated by the great Defiance Campaign of 1952. The response of the State towards the Congress of the People campaign and the adoption of the Freedom Charter demonstrated its intention to crush what had previously been accepted as legitimate expressions for equality.

The numbers of highly successful national general strikes, motivated in the main by political and not economic demands, proved the growing maturity of the urban non-white working class. The magnificent resistance by the peasants in Pondoland, Sekhukhuniland and Natal in the late 1950s pointed also to the new spirit of militancy and struggle in the countryside.

The general strike as a method of political mobilisation was suppressed with the utmost vigour, and by the end of the 1950s could no longer be effectively employed as an instrument of mass struggle. Other protests were increasingly broken by police brutality and the use of orthodox mass demonstration as an effective weapon was demonstrably no longer feasible.

Legal opposition was rendered ineffective by bannings, exiles and the imprisonment of activists and leaders to long terms for the most trivial infringements. Finally, by such laws as the Terrorism and Sabotage Acts, all opposition by legal or peaceful means was rendered impossible.

*“The 1950s were among the most stirring and struggle-filled decades in the history of the liberation movement.”*

### **Heightened Political Ferment**

In the field of representation, any reformist illusion that may still have existed of a slow advance towards democracy was shattered by the removal of the historic remains of non-white representation, including even undemocratic and powerless bodies such as the Native Representative Council.

Thus, the enemy unmasked himself completely not only to a group of advanced thinkers, but to the mass of the people as a whole. The liberation surge towards independence of the African continent which marked the late 1950s and early 1960s had an important bearing on our own situation.

Not only were friendly borders creeping closer, but in a very real way, these events stimulated and excited people in the unliberated territories in the direction of self-rule. The basic drive for this in our country had never been suppressed. But the events in South Africa in the previous decade, and what was happening on the continent, confirmed that conquest of power by the people was a realisable goal in our lifetime.

The enormous material power of the enemy, and by contrast the material weakness of the people, was to them no more than a temporary impediment. Memory was fresh of Cuba and – on our own continent – Algeria, both of which had proved that in the long run material resources alone are not a determining factor.

The heightened political ferment both here and on our continent reflected itself in the growth and further maturing of all sections of the liberation front. Those leaders who were unable to adjust to the new revolutionary mood (even before the policy of the preparations for organised armed resistance) fell by the wayside.

The cohesion and unity of action between the various national and social groupings comprising the liberation front reached new heights. All this constituted not only moral justification for a move towards armed struggle, but what is more important, conditions had been created – they were not always there – making a departure in this direction correct, necessary and, in the true sense, revolutionary.

*“The events in South Africa ... confirmed that conquest of power by the people was a realisable goal in our lifetime.”*

### **Our Approach to Revolutionary Armed Struggle**

In a way, the decision taken in 1961 was, historically speaking, in the tradition of the earlier armed resistance to the entrenchment of the foreigner. But it is now occurring in a new situation.

Not only had this situation to be understood but the art and science – both political and military – of armed liberation struggles in the modern epoch had to be grasped and applied. The head-on mobile warfare of the traditional African armies of the past could not meet the challenge. The riot, the street fight, the outbursts of unorganised violence, individual terrorism – these were symptoms of the militant spirit, but not pointers to revolutionary technique.

The winning of our freedom by armed struggle – the only method left open to us – demands more than passion. It demands an understanding and an implementation of revolutionary theory and techniques in the actual conditions facing us. It demands a sober assessment of the obstacles in our way and an appreciation that such a struggle is bitter and protracted. It demands, too, the dominance in our thinking of achievement over drama. We believe our movement acted in accordance with these guidelines when it embarked upon the detailed preparation for the launching of guerrilla struggle.

We understood that the main physical environment of such a struggle in the initial period is outside the enemy strongholds in the cities, in the vast stretches of our countryside. The opening steps in 1961 – organised sabotage mainly in the urban areas – served a special purpose and this was never advanced as a technique that would, on its own, either lead to the destruction of the state or even do it great material damage (although guerrilla activity in the urban areas of a special type is always important as an auxiliary). At the same time, there was a threefold need to be met in order to lay the foundations for more developed and meaningful armed activity of the guerrilla type.

The first was the need to create a military apparatus and, more particularly, to recruit large numbers of professional cadres who were to be trained and who would form the core of future guerrilla bands.

The second was the need to demonstrate effectively to all that we were making a sharp and open break with the processes of the previous period, which had correctly given emphasis to militant struggle short of armed confrontation.

The third was the need to present an effective method for the overthrow of white supremacy through planned rather than spontaneous activity. The sabotage campaign was an earnest indication of our seriousness in the pursuit of this new strategy.

All three needs were served by this convincing evidence that our liberation movement had correctly adjusted itself to the new situation and was creating an apparatus actually capable of clandestinely hitting the enemy and making preparation for a more advanced phase.

The situation was such that without activity of this nature our whole political leadership may have been at stake, both inside and outside the country, and the steps which were simultaneously taken for the recruitment and preparation of military cadres would have met with less response.

*“The winning of our freedom by armed struggle –  
the only method left open to us – demands more than passion.”*

### **The Relationship Between the Political and Military**

When we talk of revolutionary armed struggle, we are talking of political struggle by means that include the use of military force, even though once force as a tactic is introduced it has the most far-reaching consequences on every aspect of our activities. It is important to emphasise this because our movement must reject all manifestations of militarism that separate armed people's struggle from its political context.

Reference has already been made to the danger of the thesis that regards the creation of military areas as the generator of mass resistance. But even more is involved in this concept. One of the vital problems connected with this bears on the important question of the relationship between the political and military. From the very beginning, our movement has brooked no ambiguity concerning this. The primacy of the political leadership is unchallenged and supreme, and all revolutionary formations and levels (whether armed or not) are subordinate to this leadership.

To say this is not just to invoke tradition. This approach is rooted in the very nature of this type of revolutionary struggle and is borne out by the experience of the overwhelming majority of revolutionary movements that have engaged in such struggles.

Except in very rare instances, the people's armed challenge against a foe with formidable material strength does not achieve dramatic and swift success. The path is filled with obstacles and we harbour no illusions on this score in the case of South Africa. In the long run, it can only succeed if it attracts the active support of the mass of the people. Without this lifeblood, it is doomed.

Even in our country, with the historical background and traditions of armed resistance still within the memory of many people, and the special developments of the immediate past, the involvement of the masses is unlikely to be the result of a sudden, natural and automatic consequence of military clashes. It has to be won in all-round political mobilisation, which must accompany the military activities. This includes educational and agitational work throughout the country to cope with the sophisticated torrent of misleading propaganda and "information" of the enemy, which will become more intense as the struggle sharpens.

When armed clashes begin, they seldom involve more than a comparative handful of combatants whose very conditions of fighting-existence make them incapable of exercising the functions of all-round political leadership. The masses of the peasants, workers and youth, beleaguered for a long time by the enemy's military occupation, have to be activated in a multitude of ways not only to ensure a growing stream of recruits for the fighting units, but also to harass the enemy politically so that his forces are dispersed and therefore weakened. This calls for the exercise of all-round political leadership.

*“The masses of the peasants, workers and youth...have to be activated in a multitude of ways...to harass the enemy politically so that his forces are dispersed and therefore weakened.”*

### **All-Round Political Leadership**

Guerrilla warfare, the special, and in our case the only, form in which the armed liberation struggle can be launched, is neither static nor does it take place in a vacuum.

The tempo, the overall strategy, to be employed, the opening of new fronts, the progression from lower to higher forms and then to mobile warfare – these and other vital questions cannot be solved by the military leadership alone. They require overall political judgments intimately involved with the people, both inside and outside the actual areas of armed combat.

If mere awareness of oppression, combined with heroic examples by armed bands, were enough, the struggle would indeed be simple. There would be no collaborators and it would be hard to find neutrals. But to believe this is to believe that the course of struggle is determined solely by what we do in the fighting units and further involves the fallacious assumption that the masses are rock-like and incorruptible.

The enemy is as aware as we are that the side that wins the allegiance of the people wins the struggle. It is naive to believe that oppressed and beleaguered people cannot temporarily, even in large numbers, be won over by fear, terror, lies, indoctrination and provocation to treat liberators as enemies. In fact, history proves that without the most intensive all-round political activity, this is the more likely result.

It is therefore all the more vital that the revolutionary leadership is nationwide and has its roots both inside and outside the actual areas of combat. Above all, when victory comes, it must not be a hollow one. To ensure this, we must also ensure that what is brought to power is not an army but the masses as a whole, at the head of which stands its organised political leadership. This is the perspective which is rooted at all levels of our liberation movements, whether within or outside the army.

Our confidence in final victory rests not on the wish or the dream but on our understanding of our own conditions and the historical processes. This understanding must be deepened and must

spread to every level of our movement. We must have a clear grasp not only of ourselves and of our own forces, but also of the enemy – of his power and vulnerability.

Guerrilla struggle is certainly no exception to the rule that depth of understanding, and knowledge of realities, both favourable and unfavourable, make for more lasting commitment and more illuminating leadership. How then do we view the enemy we face – his strength and his weakness? What sort of structure do we face and how dogged will the enemy resistance be?

*“We must have a clear grasp not only of ourselves and of our own forces, but also of the enemy – of his power and vulnerability.”*

### **The Enemy – His Strength and Weakness**

On the face of it, the enemy is in stable command of a rich and varied economy which, even at this stage when it is not required to extend itself, can afford an enormous military budget. He has a relatively well-trained and efficient army and police force. He can draw on fairly large manpower resources. In addition, the major imperialist powers, such as Britain, West Germany, France, the United States and Japan, who have an enormous stake in the economy of our country, constitute a formidable support for the apartheid regime.

Already now, before the crisis deepens, the imperialist partners of South Africa have done much to develop the economy and armament programme of South Africa. In a situation of crisis, they may pass over from support to active intervention to save the racist regime.

If there is one lesson that the history of guerrilla struggle has taught, it is that the material strength and resources of the enemy are by no means a decisive factor. Guerrilla warfare almost by definition presents a situation in which there is a vast imbalance of material and military resource between the opposing sides. It is designed to cope with the situation in which the enemy is infinitely superior in relation to every conventional factor of warfare. It is par excellence the weapon of the materially weak against the materially strong.

Given its popular character and given a population which increasingly sides with and shields the guerrilla, whilst at the same time opposing and exposing the enemy, the survival and growth of a people's army is assured by the skilful exercise of tactics. Surprise, mobility and tactical retreat should make it difficult for the enemy to bring into play its superior firepower in any decisive battles.

No individual battle is fought in circumstances favourable to the enemy. Superior forces can thus be harassed, weakened and, in the end, destroyed. The absence of an orthodox front, of fighting lines; the need of the enemy to attenuate his resources and lines of communication over vast areas; and the need to protect the widely scattered installations on which his economy is dependent – these are among the factors that serve in the long run to compensate in favour of the guerrilla for the disparity in the starting strength of the adversaries.

The words "in the long run" must be stressed because it would be idle to dispute the considerable military advantages to the enemy of his high-level industrialisation, his ready-to-hand reserves of white manpower and his excellent roads, railways and air transport, which facilitate swift manoeuvres and speedy concentration of personnel. But we must not overlook the fact that, over a period of time, many of these unfavourable factors will begin to operate in favour of the liberation forces:

- The ready-to-hand resources, including food production, depend overwhelmingly on non-white labour which, with the growing intensity of the struggle, will not remain docile and cooperative.
- The white manpower resources may seem adequate initially but must become dangerously stretched as guerrilla warfare develops. Already, extremely short of skilled labour – the monopoly of the whites – the mobilisation of a large force for a protracted struggle will place a further burden on the workings of the economy.
- In contrast to many other major guerrilla struggles, the enemy's economic and manpower resources are all situated within the theatre of war and there is no secure external pool (other than direct intervention by a foreign state) safe from sabotage, mass action and guerrilla action, on which the enemy can draw.
- The very sophistication of the economy with its well-developed system of communications makes it a much more vulnerable target. In an undeveloped country, the interruption of supplies to any given region may be no more than a local setback. In a highly sensitive modern structure of the South African type, the successful harassment of transport to any major industrial complex inevitably inflicts immense damage to the economy as a whole and to the morale of the enemy.

One of the more popular misconceptions concerning guerrilla warfare is that a physical environment which conforms to a special pattern is indispensable – thick jungle, inaccessible mountain areas, swamps, a friendly border and so on. The availability of this sort of terrain is, of course, of tremendous advantage to the guerrillas, especially in the early non-operational phase when training and other preparatory steps are undertaken, and no external bases are available for this purpose.

When operations commence, the guerrilla cannot survive, let alone flourish, unless he moves to areas where people live and work and where the enemy can be engaged in combat. If he is fortunate enough to have behind him a friendly border or areas of difficult access that can provide temporary refuge, it is, of course, advantageous. But guerrilla warfare can be, and has been, waged in every conceivable type of terrain, in deserts, in swamps, in farm fields, in built-up areas, in plains, in the bush and in countries without friendly borders or islands surrounded by

the sea. This whole question is one of adjusting survival tactics to the sort of terrain in which operations have to be carried out.

In any case, in the vast expanse that is South Africa, a people's force will find a multitude of variations in topography, deserts, mountains, forests, veld and swamps. There might not appear to be a single impregnable mountain or impenetrable jungle, but the country abounds in terrain that in general is certainly no less favourable for guerrilla operations than some of the terrain in which other guerrilla movements operated successfully. Also, the issue must be looked at in the context of guerrillas who are armed and operate in the terrain. The combination makes an area impregnable for the guerrilla.

South Africa's tremendous size will make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the white regime to keep the whole of it under armed surveillance in strength and in depth. Hence, an early development of a relatively safe (though shifting) rear is not beyond the realm of practicality.

### **The White Group**

The above are only some of the important factors that have not always been studied and understood. It is necessary to stress these factors not only because they give balance to our efforts but because – properly assessed – they help destroy the myth of the enemy's invincibility.

But above all, a scientific revolutionary strategy demands a correct appreciation of the political character of the forces that are ranged against one another in the South African struggle for liberation.

Is the enemy a monolith and will he remain so until his final defeat? What is the main content of the struggle for liberation and, flowing from this, which is the main revolutionary force and who are its potential allies and supporters? These are questions of capital importance. They play a vital part in determining the tactics of the revolutionary struggle, the broad alliances for which we must strive, the organisational structures we create and many other fundamental approaches. They must be considered within the framework of the special feature of the objective situation which faces us.

South Africa's social and economic structure and the relationships which it generates are perhaps unique. It is not a colony, yet it has, in regard to the overwhelming majority of its people, most of the features of the classical colonial structures. Conquest and domination by an alien people, a system of discrimination and exploitation based on race, technique of indirect rule – these and more are the traditional trappings of the classical colonial framework.

*“Conquest and domination by an alien people, a system of discrimination and exploitation based on race, technique of indirect rule – these and more are the traditional trappings of the classical colonial framework.”*

Whilst at the one level it is an "independent" national state, at another level it is a country subjugated by a minority race. What makes the structure unique and adds to its complexity is that the exploiting nation is not, as in the classical imperialist relationships, situated in a geographically distinct mother country, but is settled within the borders. What is more, the roots of the dominant nation have been embedded in our country by more than three centuries of presence. It is thus an alien body only in the historical sense.

The material wellbeing of the white group and its political, social and economic privileges are, we know, rooted in its racial domination of the indigenous majority. It has resisted and will resist doggedly and passionately any attempt to shift it from this position. Its theorists and leaders ceaselessly play upon the theme of "We have nowhere else to go". They dishonestly ignore and even twist the fact that the uncertainty about the future of the oppressor in our land is an uncertainty born not of our racialism but of his.

The spectre is falsely raised of a threat to the white men's language and culture to "justify" a policy of cultural discrimination and domination. By economic bribes and legal artifices that preserve for him the top layers of skills and wage income, the white worker is successfully mobilised as one of racialism's most reliable contingents. In every walk of life, white autocracy creates privilege by operation of the law and, where necessary, the gun, and with a primitive and twisted "proof" of its own superiority.

Nevertheless, the defence of all-round economic, social and cultural privileges, combined with centuries of indoctrination and deeply felt theoretical rationalisation that centre on survival, will make the enemy we face a ferocious and formidable foe. So long as the threat from the liberation movement was not powerful enough to endanger the very existence of white baaskap, there was room for division – sometimes quite sharp in the white political camp.

Its motivation amongst the ruling class was competition for the lion's share of the spoils from the exploitation of the non-white people. It always centred around the problem of the most effective way of "keeping the native in his place". In such an atmosphere, there were even moments when white workers adopted militant class postures against the small group which owns South Africa's wealth. But the changed world mood and internal situation inhibited these confrontations. The laager-minded white group, as a whole, moves more and more in the direction of a common defence of what is considered a common fate.

These monolithic tendencies are reinforced by a Hitler-like feeling of confidence that the fortress is impregnable and unassailable for all time. This process of all-white solidarity will only be arrested by the achievements of the liberation movement. For the moment, the reality is that apart from a small group of revolutionary whites who have an honoured place as comrades in the struggle, we face what is by and large a united and confident enemy that acts in alliance with, and is strengthened by, world imperialism. All significant sections of the white political movement are in broad agreement on the question of defeating our liberation struggle.

This confrontation on the lines of colour – at least in the early stages of the conflict – is not of our choosing; it is of the enemy's making. It will not be easy to eliminate some of its more tragic consequences. But it does not follow that this will be so for all time.

It is not altogether impossible that in a different situation, the white working class, or a substantial section of it, may come to see that their true long-term interest coincides with that of the non-white workers. We must miss no opportunity either now or in the future to try and make them aware of this truth and to win over those who are ready to break with the policy of racial domination. Nor must we ever be slow to take advantage of differences and divisions which our successes will inevitably spark off to isolate the most vociferous, the most uncompromising and the most reactionary elements amongst the whites.

Our policy must continually stress in the future (as it has in the past) that there is room in South Africa for all who live in it – but only on the basis of absolute democracy.

*“Our policy must continually stress that there is room in South Africa for all who live in it – but only on the basis of absolute democracy.”*

### **The African Masses – The Main Force for Liberation**

So much for the enemy. What of the liberation forces?

Here too we are called upon to examine the most fundamental features of our situation, which serve to mould our revolutionary strategy and tactics. The main content of the present stage of the South African revolution is the national liberation of the largest and most oppressed group – the African people. This strategic aim must govern every aspect of the conduct of our struggle, whether it be the formulation of policy or the creation of structures.

Amongst other things, it demands in the first place the maximum mobilisation of the African people as a dispossessed and racially oppressed nation. This is the mainspring and it must not be weakened. It involves a stimulation and a deepening of national confidence, national pride and national assertiveness. Properly channelled and properly led, these qualities do not stand in conflict with the principles of internationalism. Indeed, they become the basis for more lasting and more meaningful cooperation – a cooperation that is self-imposed, equal and one which is neither based on dependence nor gives the appearance of being so.

The national character of the struggle must therefore dominate our approach. But it is a national struggle that is taking place in a different era and in a different context from those which characterised the early struggles against colonialism. It is happening in a new kind of world – a world no longer monopolised by the imperialist world system; a world in which the existence of the powerful socialist system and a significant sector of newly liberated areas has altered the balance of forces; a world in which the horizons liberated from foreign oppression extend beyond

mere formal political control and encompass the element which makes such control meaningful: economic emancipation.

It is also happening in a new kind of South Africa; a South Africa in which there is a large and well-developed working class and in which the independent expressions of the working people – their political organs and trade unions – are very much part of the liberation front.

Thus, our nationalism must not be confused with chauvinism or narrow nationalism of a previous epoch. It must not be confused with the classical drive by an elitist group among the oppressed people to gain ascendancy so that they can replace the oppressor in the exploitation of the mass.

But none of this detracts from the basically national context of our liberation drive. In the last resort, it is only the success of the national democratic revolution which – by destroying the existing social and economic relationships – will bring with it a correction of the historical injustices perpetrated against the indigenous majority and thus lay the basis for a new, and deeper internationalist, approach.

Until then, the national sense of grievance is the most potent revolutionary force, which must be harnessed. To blunt it in the interests of abstract concepts of internationalism is, in the long run, doing neither a service to revolution nor to internationalism.

*“Our nationalism...must not be confused with the classical drive by an elitist group among the oppressed people to gain ascendancy so that they can replace the oppressor in the exploitation of the mass.”*

### **The Role of the Coloured and Indian People**

Although subjected to the most intense racial oppression and exploitation, the African is not the only oppressed national group in South Africa.

The two million-strong coloured community, and three-quarter million Indians, suffer varying forms of national humiliation, discrimination and oppression. They are part of the non-white base upon which rests white privilege. As such, they constitute an integral part of the social forces ranged against white supremacy. Despite deceptive and often meaningless concessions, they share a common fate with their African brothers and their own liberation is inextricably bound up with the liberation of the African people.

A unity in action between all the oppressed groups is fundamental to the advance of our liberation struggle. Without such a unity, the enemy strength multiplies, and the attainment of a people's victory is delayed. Historically, both communities have played a most important part in the stimulation and intensification of the struggle for freedom.

It is a matter of proud record that amongst the first and most gallant martyrs in the armed combat against the enemy was a coloured comrade, Basil February. The jails in South Africa are a witness to the large-scale participation by Indian and coloured comrades of every level of our revolutionary struggle. From the very inception of Umkhonto, they were more than well represented in the first contingents who took life in hand to help lay the basis for this new phase in our struggle.

This mood was reflected not only in the deeds of its more advanced representatives. As communities, too, the coloured and Indian people have often in the past, by their actions, shown that they form part of the broad sweep towards liberation.

The first series of mass acts of deliberate defiance of the conqueror's law after the crushing of the Bambata rebellion was the campaign led by that outstanding son of the Indian people – Mahatma Gandhi. Thereafter, the Indian community and its leaders – particularly those who came to the fore in the 1940s – played no small part in the injection of a more radical and more militant mood into the liberation movement as a whole.

The stirring demonstrations of the 1950s – from the Defiance Campaign to the Congress of the People, to the general strike, and the peasant revolts and mass demonstrations – saw many examples of united action by all the oppressed people. Indian workers responded in large numbers to almost every call for a general strike. Indian shopkeepers could always be relied upon to declare a day of hartal in solidarity with any protest being organised. Memory is still fresh of the outstanding response by the coloured workers of the Western Cape to the 1961 call by the ANC for a national general political strike.

The Alliance among the Congress organisations was a spur to the solidarity and reflected it. But events both before and after Rivonia put paid to the structures that had been created to express the Alliance.

How can we strengthen and make effective the cooperation between the communities and how can we integrate committed revolutionaries irrespective of their racial background?

*A unity in action between all the oppressed groups is fundamental to the advance of our liberation struggle.*

### **Our Fighting Alliance**

Whatever instruments are created to give expression to the unity of the liberation drive, they must accommodate two fundamental propositions:

- Firstly, they must not be ambiguous on the question of the primary role of the most oppressed African mass.

- Secondly, those belonging to the other oppressed groups and those few white revolutionaries who show themselves ready to make common cause with our aspirations, must be fully integrated on the basis of individual equality.

Approached in the right spirit, these two propositions do not stand in conflict but reinforce one another.

Equality of participation in our national front does not mean a mechanical parity between the various national groups. Not only would this in practice amount to inequality (again at the expense of the majority), but it would lend flavour to the slander that our enemies are ever ready to spread of a multiracial alliance dominated by minority groups. This has never been so and will never be so. But the sluggish way in which the Movement inside the country responded to the new situation after 1960, in which cooperation continued between some organisations that were legal (e.g. SAIC, CPO, COD) and those that were illegal (e.g. ANC), sometimes led to the superficial impression that the legal organisations – because they could speak and operate more publicly and thus more noticeably – may have had more than their deserved place in the leadership of the Alliance.

Therefore, not only the substance but also the form of our structural creations must, in a way which the people can see, give expression to the main emphasis of the present stage of our struggle. This approach is not a pandering to chauvinism, to racialism or other such backward attitudes. We are revolutionaries, not narrow nationalists. Committed revolutionaries are our brothers, to whatever group they belong. There can be no second-class participants in our Movement. It is for the enemy we reserve our assertiveness and our justified sense of grievance.

*“There can be no second-class participants in our Movement. It is for the enemy we reserve our assertiveness and our justified sense of grievance.”*

The important task of mobilising and gaining the support of other oppressed non-white groups has already been referred to. Like every other oppressed group (including the Africans), we must not naively assume that mere awareness of oppression will, by itself, push the Indian and coloured people in the direction of opposing the enemy and aligning themselves with the liberation movement.

The potential is there, of course, because in a very real sense the future of the Indian and coloured people and their liberation as oppressed groups is intimately bound up with the liberation of the Africans. But active support and participation has to be fought for and won. Otherwise the enemy will succeed in its never-ending attempt to create a gap between these groups and the Africans, and even recruit substantial numbers of them to actively collaborate with it.

The bottom of the barrel will be scrapped in the attempt to create confusion about the objectives of the liberation movement. More particularly, the enemy will feed on the insecurity and dependency that is often part of the thinking of minority oppressed groups. They will try to raise a doubt in their minds about whether there is a place for them in a future liberated South Africa. They have already spread the slander that, at best, for the coloureds and Indians white domination will be replaced by black domination.

It is therefore all the more important, consistent with our first principle, that the coloured and Indian people should see themselves as an integral part of the liberation movement and not as mere auxiliaries.

## **The Working Class**

Is there a special role for the working class in our national struggle?

We have already referred to the special character of the South African social and economic structure. In our country – more than in any other part of the oppressed world – it is inconceivable for liberation to have meaning without a return of the wealth of the land to the people as a whole.

*“In our country – more than in any other part of the oppressed world – it is inconceivable for liberation to have meaning without a return of the wealth of the land to the people as a whole.”*

It is therefore a fundamental feature of our strategy that victory must embrace more than formal political democracy. To allow the existing economic forces to retain their interests intact is to feed the root of racial supremacy and does not represent even the shadow of liberation.

Our drive towards national emancipation is therefore in a very real way bound up with economic emancipation. We have suffered more than just national humiliation. Our people are deprived of their due in the country's wealth; their skills have been suppressed and poverty and starvation has been their life experience. The correction of these centuries-old economic injustices lies at the very core of our national aspirations.

We do not underestimate the complexities that will face a people's government during the transformation period, nor the enormity of the problems of meeting economic needs of the mass of the oppressed people. But one thing is certain – in our land, this cannot be effectively tackled unless the basic wealth and the basic resources are at the disposal of the people as a whole and are not manipulated by sections or individuals, be they white or black.

*“Our drive towards national emancipation is bound up with economic emancipation.”*

This perspective of a speedy progression from formal liberation to genuine and lasting emancipation is made more real by the existence in our country of a large and growing working class whose class consciousness complements national consciousness. Its political organisations and the trade unions have played a fundamental role in shaping and advancing our revolutionary cause.

It is historically understandable that the doubly oppressed and doubly exploited working class constitutes a distinct and reinforcing layer of our liberation and socialism – and does not stand in conflict with the national interest. Its militancy and political consciousness as a revolutionary class will play no small part in our victory and in the construction of a real people's South Africa.

Beyond our borders in Zimbabwe, Angola, Mozambique and Namibia are our brothers and sisters, who similarly are engaged in a fierce struggle against colonialist and racist regimes. We fight an Unholy Alliance of Portugal, Rhodesia and South Africa, with the latter as the main economic and military support. The historic ZAPU-ANC alliance is a unique form of cooperation between two liberation movements, which unites the huge potential of the oppressed people in both South Africa and Zimbabwe. The extension of cooperation and coordination of all the people of southern Africa as led by FRELIMO, ZAPU, SWAPO, MPLA and the ANC is a vital part of our strategy.

What then is the broad purpose of our military struggle? Simply put, in the first phase, it is the complete political and economic emancipation of all our people and the constitution of a society that accords with the basic provisions of our programme – the Freedom Charter.

This, together with our general understanding of our revolutionary theory, provides us with the strategic framework for the concrete elaboration and implementation of policy in a continuously changing situation. It must be combined with a more intensive programme of research, examination and analysis of the conditions of the different strata of our people (in particular those on the land), their local grievances, hopes and aspirations, so that the flow from theory to application – when the situation makes application possible – will be unhampered.

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**Memorandum by Ben Turok before the ANC's Morogoro Conference**  
and a "Reply" by Joe Matthews  
5 April 1969

The present discussion will be based largely on experiences in Dar es Salaam and on information obtained from other comrades from time to time.

What is wrong? No one in the movement can be content with the present situation; all must be aware of a deepening malaise such as we have never known before.

- *Theoretical*

One must point to the absence of discussion documents of any kind for a long period, and to the utter failure of our leadership to introduce a political line in the movement that could orientate it to our main tasks: the struggle at home.

- *Political*

In Dar es Salaam, practically no efforts have been made over a very long time to keep the membership informed of the work of the leadership. There have been no reports back from conferences, no formal reports on the fighting in Zimbabwe, no discussion of the difficulties around us. Instead, we seem to have been faced by bureaucracy, heavily entrenched in office, hostile to questions and tight-lipped in extreme.

- *Style of work*

Our officials have come to adopt authoritarian attitudes towards comrades in lower positions. Evidence of maladministration is massive. There have been a number of cases of cash embezzlement, which are known to many of us.

- *Drunkenness*

Drunkenness was at one time a major feature of our office in Dar es Salaam – day and night. Some comrades were drunk for days on end, and those who should have set an example were sometimes no better. There has been an improvement recently, but the intention here is not to point a finger; it is to comment on a style of work wholly out of keeping with a serious movement. Leading personnel who visit Dar es Salaam for short periods often stay in a hotel. The sight of leaders spending evening after evening in a bar is not one of which can bring credit to our movement.

- *Mobilisation of rank and file*

Perhaps the most deplorable aspect of the work of the movement in Dar es Salaam is the treatment meted out to our military comrades. A number of officials working at political posts have openly shown the most appalling contempt for the army men, failing to exercise common courtesy, let alone according them the honour they deserve. Our men in Mandela camp live in squalor. They sleep on the floor on thin mats, their building is in disrepair and there is every

evidence of gross neglect. Our men are volunteers, they live a dull, monotonous existence of waiting. The camp itself badly needs a facelift. It needs some decoration, some facilities for amusement, a flat or two, a proper library with up-to-date magazines – in short, it must be turned into a home for the sick and the homeless. At present it is a slum.

*“No one in the movement can be content with the present situation; all must be aware of a deepening malaise such as we have never known before.”*

### **Why things are going wrong**

There can be no doubt but that everyone in the movement is deeply concerned with our frustrations in going home. No one can be happy in exile.

While we must pay the highest tribute to the action of our immortal heroes of Zimbabwe battles, it is obvious that those actions could only be regarded as one of the steps necessary. If the great majority of our personnel spent most of their time on concentrated activity oriented around the question of going home, little of the weaknesses mentioned in part 1 above would have emerged.

What is required is a total approach to this problem with exploration at every level, with constant practical training in all related fields, for the numerous problems that the act of going home will bring out.

How many of our leaders can read a compass proficiently? How many can move comfortably at night? How many are physically fit? How many know elementary first aid? Once we ask these questions, it becomes immediately apparent that there are many who do not have the appearance of suitability for going home. Too many of our people are no longer concerned with the problems of the struggle, but rather with those of adjustment to life in exile. And the temptations are often great for a life of comparative security and ease.

It is often said that for an organisation to be healthy, the discrepancies between the elders and the rank and file ought not to be too great. Obviously, leaders need peace of mind, some comfort and facilities for quiet work. However, it ought to be constantly borne in mind that these requirements ought not to be an excuse for the emergence of an elite. There has been little elective democracy in our movement for well over a decade. Democracy must be seen to operate – the power of recall is basic to discipline and mutual respect between leaders and led.

## Proposals and Conclusions

- *Immediate tasks*

Since an atmosphere of crisis prevails in our ranks at present, it is necessary to take such concrete remedial action as will ease off the tension. The most helpful way this could be done is by a large-scale planning operation centred around the problems of "going home".

The most dynamic, imaginative and experienced personnel in the movement must be drawn into a special planning council to examine every aspect and every possibility. They will have to study all possible routes: land, sea and even perhaps air, in order that no possibility is missed.

What is wanted is a vast network bearing vital information to the centre of operational planning and carrying instructions and suggestions for investigation outwards.

Part of the work of this planning council should be the setting up of highly specialised training schools where our personnel are put through carefully prepared courses in the kind of activities they will be engaged in on return.

- *Organisational*

In sum, it is suggested that comrades of all races be admitted to full membership of the ANC outside South Africa, on the condition that African comrades predominate and are seen to predominate on all committees and in the general work of the organisation.

- *Report back*

Regular report-back conferences to check up on work planned ought to be held every few months. Leaders should give an account of their work and subject themselves to scrutiny. The replacement of tired leaders or those who have failed in their duties ought to be given attention regularly. Machinery for the election of replacements must be developed.

## Conclusion

There is a great deal more to be said if our struggle is to rise to the heights of former days. We have a proud history of political struggle, and the heroes of Zimbabwe have blazed a new path of military action. It is up to those of us who are now lying relatively immobilised in exile to take up with new resolve the fight to free South Africa. There is no more noble task before mankind today.

*It is up to those of us who are now lying relatively immobilised in exile to take up with new resolve the fight to free South Africa.*

## **Reply (unsigned) by Joe Matthews**

The Preparatory Committee has had an opportunity to study the document submitted by Comrade Turok, which was found very interesting and illuminating.

We note that the document begins by admitting a lack of information except such as has been gained in Dar es Salaam or from hearsay. It should be remarked that in the circumstances a great deal of caution would be required in drawing any general conclusions from such a limited experience.

Everyone in the movement is aware of the fact that the movement is in many ways going through a very difficult period.

Much of the running around or "globe-trotting" was devoted to arranging for training in various countries; collecting weapons; obtaining funds; persuading governments to allow camps in their countries which took years to achieve; to getting governments to agree to arms being brought into their countries and to allow them to be used for training; to go through the excruciatingly painful job of begging all kinds of governments and organisations for what appear to any revolutionary to be obvious and simple requests...

It is highly doubtful if there is a need to make a new theoretical analysis of the South African revolution and to raise the level of our ideological thinking. We are faced with actual, organisational and practical problems.

How do you get well-armed men to designated bases in South Africa safely, so that they can carry out their tasks? How do you get trained underground workers into the country to do work and survive under those conditions? How do you set up efficient propaganda machinery inside the country? How do you get arms into the hands of the people in South Africa?

The point made regarding accountability and the making of reports to inform the membership and so on is well made. Though it should be borne in mind that the matters on which most people seek information, and which have important political meaning, are precisely those which are sensitive militarily and politically dangerous in countries that are not ours.

Being away from our mass base and without democracy in the form of meetings, conferences, elections and so on – quite clearly the danger of bureaucracy becomes sharp. An examination of the experiences of the PAC and other movements will soon show that the utmost vigilance is required in any revolutionary movement against the possibility of infiltration and disruption by enemy agents – this is especially so where the internal mass movement is not there to sift and vouch for people who come from outside claiming to be members of the movement.

The paragraph dealing with style of work seems to the Preparatory Committee to be too lurid, melodramatic and unjust. The statements are too general and sweeping and therefore cannot even be checked.

"There have been a number of cases of embezzlement." This is a very serious charge. Our movement has severely punished some comrades found guilty of misusing funds. Fortunately, this has not been a problem in our movement in contrast to some others. In fact, we have had the opposite accusation that our Treasury is too tight-fisted with money.

It is regrettable that a few comrades in our movement are given to excessive drinking. But is the whole of our machinery to be castigated for this fault? If it is confined to some individuals, however prominent, should we not in fact say so and to use your words "point a finger"?

As regards the problem of accommodation of "leading personnel who visit Dar es Salaam for short periods", they should stay at a hotel because they must be accommodated. The hotel they often go to is the worst in Dar es Salaam, precisely to save on costs. There was a time when our headquarters were in Dar es Salaam and there were many comrades accommodated there. Then it was possible for comrades to stay at the residences of other comrades. We do not know of leaders who spend "evening after evening in a bar".

The paragraphs dealing with the need to involve our members more and those relating to the need to improve the conditions of MK men, and also to intensify political work, are high on the agenda of the conference. All proposals to this end are welcome. But here again, are some statements not too sweeping and generalised?

The suggestion that there has been an emergence of an "elite" is amazing. The conditions in which leading personnel are forced to work, certainly in Tanzania, can hardly be described as inducing the emergence of an elite. The ANC leadership can hardly be described as living the life of an "elite" as compared with other members, including the MK, despite the remarks on Mandela camp. The conditions under which our top leadership, such as Tambo, Kotane, Marks and other leaders, are living ought to fill members of the Congress movement with absolute shame if they had any conscience.

The proposals in your document are all very welcome indeed and, in particular, the one for integration of all personnel in the ANC, we believe could be a tremendous step forward, which could galvanise the whole movement. There is no doubt that something along these lines will emerge from our conference.

We must stress that the foregoing represents the view of the Preparatory Committee, which is responding to all contributions and will welcome further comments so as to ensure that we arrive at the conference completely united in our approach.

Some matters of an ideological and theoretical nature we have not dealt with because they will be with us for years during the revolution and are more long-term. The same applies to problems of strategy and tactics.