

65TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY

*Speeches by Alfred Nzo, Secretary General of the African National Congress,
and Joe Slovo, Chairman of the South African Communist Party,
at the 65th Anniversary Meeting of the South African Communist Party,
London, July 30th, 1986*

Message of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress

Delivered by Secretary General Alfred Nzo

London

July 30th, 1986

Comrade Chairman

Comrade Chairman of the South African Communist Party,

Comrades and Friends,

It gives us great pleasure to convey to this meeting, convened to mark the 65th anniversary of the South African Communist Party, the fraternal greetings of the National Executive Committee and the entire membership of the African National Congress. On this day we congratulate the Central Committee and all the members of the South African Communist Party and salute them for the sterling contribution they and their Party have made during six and a half decades to the common struggle for the national and social emancipation of our people.

The anniversary of your Party is taking place at a time when events of great historical significance and importance are taking place in our country, South Africa. Breaking through the stifling barrier of illegality, imposed on them by the fascist apartheid regime, both the ANC and the SACP are emerging as defiant standard-bearers marching at the head of the militant formations of the democratic movement engulfing the length and breadth of South Africa. The banners of our two organisations constantly flutter defiantly at the head of the revolutionary columns proclaiming the imminent demise of the hated and dying apartheid system.

The struggle in South Africa continues to mount. The general crisis confronting the apartheid system is deepening without stop. The day of liberation draws ever closer. And yet, comrades, exactly because the common enemy realises that our victory is in sight, the period ahead of us will be one of the most intense conflict between the forces of progress and of reaction, a conflict which will be very costly in terms of human lives.

During the testing times in front of us we are certain that the experience and maturity which the South African Communist Party has accumulated and achieved over the period of its existence will stand our broad movement for national liberation in good stead. Constituting an important component part of that movement, the SACP is called upon further to heighten its contribution to the common cause as we march side by side towards the destruction of the apartheid system of white minority rule.

Comrades, the imperialist domination of our country has produced one of the most abhorrent social systems every known to mankind. It is no accident that apartheid has, like Nazism, been solemnly categorised and denounced as a crime against humanity. To this system, as to Nazism, belong the theory and practice of the denial of the very humanity of an entire people, resulting in the veritable daily commission of the crime of genocide against our people.

The struggle inside and outside South Africa to destroy this system has drawn into action-literally hundreds of millions of people of all races and nationalities, of different classes and peoples of various ages and ideological, political and religious persuasions. The African National Congress is proud of the contribution it has made to the achievement of this truly remarkable united front against racism and apartheid, both at home and abroad.

Outside the ranks of this front are to be found some of the most backward elements in world politics, including racists of varying hues, neo-nazis and those who seek world imperialist hegemony. As we get nearer to our goal, so do these forces including, of course, the Botha regime itself, work more feverishly to undermine and break this unity down; to immobilise as many anti-racist forces as possible; to reduce the international isolation of the apartheid regime and to weaken our movement by dividing and severing its links, especially with the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries.

As did its Nazi progenitor, the Pretoria regime, supported and echoed by its allies, relies on the use of anti-communism as its principal ideological weapon. The focus of attack of those who seek to keep us in servitude is today centred on the role and position of the SACP in the South African struggle, the extent and depth of the influence of communists within the ANC - to the point of questioning the independence of the African National Congress, the veracity of our own leadership and the honesty of our publicly-declared intentions, policy and programme.

This counter-offensive has gone so far that detailed studies are published which purport to identify the ideological positions of each one of the members of our National Executive Committee. Each one of us, members of the leadership of the ANC, find ourselves confronted insistently and with great persistence, with the task of having to explain whether we are or are not members of the Communist Party.

Many a South African democrat was faced with the question as the decade of the Fifties began. In terms of the Suppression of Communism Act, people were asked to pronounce themselves as opponents of communism or face the consequences of being banned and prohibited from being quoted by the mass media. It was surely no accident, and is instructive in terms of what is happening today, that these developments in South Africa occurred when MaCarthyism in the United States, and the Cold War globally, had reached great heights - all of them fuelled by an hysterical and maniacal anti-communism.

As the Suppression of Communism Act was passed in 1950, the memory of Nazi tyranny was still fresh in the minds of our people. When they were asked to purchase a circumscribed freedom by denouncing communism, all true South African democrats refused. They refused because they remembered that the denunciation, persecution and murder of communists would be but a prelude to the suppression of our entire democratic movement. Today we have once again returned to that position.

There are members of our National Executive Committee who have been singled out for assassination. According to the plans of the enemy, it will be said that these have been killed by anti-communist nationalists within the ranks of our movement.

The hope which the forces of reaction entertain is that if they can sell this story, they can then persuade the bulk of humanity to accept as legitimate an intensified campaign of terror directed against the national liberation movement of our country. The most recent statement by the President of the United States, Ronald Reagan, serves exactly as encouragement to the Botha regime to go all out to try to smash the African National Congress. As we know the US special services and those of Britain and of other imperialist countries, including Zionist Israel, are supplying the Pretoria regime with the information it needs in order to carry out well-planned and precise murder operations against leaders of the African National Congress. With this scenario as a background, the Botha regime is offering an 'olive branch' to those within the ranks of the African National Congress it characterises as moderate nationalists, asking them to return to

South Africa to participate in the constitutional, evolutionary process aimed at the solution to the South African problem on its own terms. Needless to repeat here that these reactionary and divisive manoeuvres will not succeed. The African National Congress is solidly united, as was graphically demonstrated by the Second National Consultative Conference held last year in Zambia. It shall not at any time be persuaded to forgo its alliance with the South African Communist Party as the history of our struggle has unmistakably demonstrated that it is the unbreakable unity of all the democratic and progressive forces that will successfully mobilise and rally all sections of the oppressed masses of our people to speedily destroy the hated apartheid system. It is appropriate to recall here the statement of our President, Comrade OR Tambo, who said, on the occasion of the

60th Anniversary of the South African Communist Party, when referring to its alliance with the ANC, that 'ours is not merely a paper alliance, created at conference tables and formalised through the signing of documents and representing only an agreement of leaders. Our alliance is a living organism that has grown out of struggle'.

Dear Comrades,

The African National Congress is a committed detachment of the international anti-imperialist movement. Were it to rise as it did in 1936, we would defend the Spanish Republic. Were it to break out again, we would support the struggle of the Vietnamese people against US aggression. Today, we must defend the Palestinian people as we do those of Namibia under the leadership of our ally, Swapo, Nicaragua, El Salvador, East Timor, Afghanistan, Mozambique and Angola. We must denounce the invasion of Grenada as we must condemn the attacks against Libya, and even more vehemently condemn the imperialist-supported South African aggression against Front Line African states. National self-determination and independence, the right of every people to freedom, equality among the people - all require that we must condemn all attempts to limit that freedom. Humanity has a right to peace and life. This right must be defended by all who oppose the bellicose policies of international imperialism, first and foremost American imperialism.

Comrades, the African National Congress will continue to defend the right of any South African who so chooses to belong to the South African Communist Party. So shall we respect the right of any of our compatriots to belong to any party of their choice as long as that party is not a vehicle for the propagation of racism and fascism. Our democratic perspectives impose these obligations on us.

Faced as we are by a common enemy, so shall we also continue to maintain our relations with the SACP and all political and other formations that genuinely strive for an end to the apartheid system and the victory of the struggle for a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa. To take any other position would be to condemn to failure the very struggle which the ANC is waging for the realisation of these objectives.

Indeed, comrades, we shall continue to work to activate all national groups and social forces in our country to be involved in the struggle to destroy the apartheid system. We want the working class to be involved in this struggle as a leading force while we also seek to ensure that the capitalists, as well, act against the apartheid regime of national oppression. Religious people and atheists must join hands against the common enemy. By their participation in the struggle, all these forces place themselves in a position to participate also in determining the future of our country.

What we have said strikes terror into the hearts of those who are opposed to our liberation, including some who proudly proclaim themselves as democrats. The fact of the matter is that imperialism is opposed to a democratic order in South Africa. Imperialism is afraid of democracy because it is unwilling that the people of our country should, in their entirety, determine their destiny. It seeks to ensure that its local representative in Southern Africa - the Botha regime - should continue to rule the roost, in its own name and in the interests of international reaction.

It is obvious enough that to achieve this objective our adversaries must work to destroy the ANC, its allies and the democratic movement as a whole. The recent disclosures that the US and British intelligence services have been passing information about the ANC to their South African counterparts does not come as a surprise. The fact of the alliance against democracy in South Africa demands that this and other forms of cooperation must exist between the fascist regime in Pretoria and the right wing establishment in the Western countries whatever its democratic pretensions.

Fifty years ago it took mass popular pressure to compel the ruling group in this country to break its relationship with the Hitlerites. Churchill, Roosevelt and De Gaulle emerged as giants because they stood on the shoulders of millions of ordinary Britons, Americans and French people who would not appease Nazism. Today, the peoples of these countries and others, such as the FRG and Japan, are called upon once more to break the immoral alliance which their governments have formed with the offspring of Nazism in South Africa.

Dear friends, the duty of all those who hate apartheid racism, national oppression, aggression and war to join with us in the struggle against this system does not in any way imply any right on the part of these forces to transform the nature of our movement or to define its objectives. Thus we reject entirely and will always oppose the efforts of the Reagan Administration to recreate the ANC into a creature of their liking, a product of the wishes of governments which are allied to the Botha regime and no longer an instrument created by our people to realise their fundamental aspirations.

Similarly, we will continue to reject all efforts to impose on us a definition of democracy which entrenches racism and the continued exploitation of our people. To talk of white minority rights is to propagate an anti-democratic principle. The government of our unitary, non-racial, democratic state will be based on the will of all our people exercised through one person one vote. To categorise the population of South Africa in racial or ethnic terms and advance a perspective of a federation of such entities is to seek to perpetuate apartheid and deny our own people a democratic system.

To question the right of our people to share in the wealth of our country is to circumscribe our democratic rights and to prepare for a situation in which it will be impossible radically to change the material conditions of millions of our people. It is to seek to create the circumstances in which it would be impossible to secure the equality of all our people, both black and white.

Comrades, the masses of our people are, in their millions, engaged in struggle precisely to achieve these objectives. This struggle has not only plunged the ruling class in our country into an enormous general crisis from which it becomes increasingly impossible to extricate itself; it is winning an increasing array of allies both inside South Africa and internationally. No states of emergency, massacres, assassinations, arrests and detentions will stop the movement forward towards the transfer of power to the people. Three and a half centuries of colonialism are now coming to a close. The rudiments of people's power are beginning to emerge even now, thanks to the enormous sacrifices that our people are making to establish a democratic order in our country.

The democratic movement heading our people's onslaught against the apartheid system has grown tremendously in strength in terms of mass following. But, more importantly, it has fully absorbed the lessons necessary to defend and protect its underground political formations that form the bedrock of the people's thrust forward. The indestructible unity and the growing capacity of this movement is graphically demonstrated during these days characterised by the most brutal fascist onslaught of the apartheid regime. The black working class, the backbone of this movement, has raised its struggle to a high point marked by a series of political strikes defiantly demanding the end of the state of emergency and the release of the detained leaders. The newly established Congress of South African Trade Unions towers at the head of the workers revolutionary actions.

Our glorious people's army, Umkhonto we Sizwe, has intensified its military campaign against apartheid in pursuance of the programme charted by the leadership of our movement, marking 1986 the year of Umkhonto we Sizwe. It has sunk its roots deep among the masses of our people whose combat formations it is leading to confront the military machine of the apartheid regime.

Thus comrades, on many fronts, millions of our people, in their various formations, are at war with the apartheid regime in pursuance of our strategic objective of seizure of power.

We are happy that the communists in our country are to be found among these millions, side by side with religious people, with people of other ideological persuasions, nationalists and others, all united by a common perspective of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa. We are greatly strengthened by the fact that the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic, Cuba, China and other socialist countries stand with us in the struggle to accomplish the noble

objective of the national and social emancipation of our people. These countries, too, share the anti-apartheid ranks with the non-aligned states and many countries in Western Europe such as Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Greece and others, and above all with the African Front Line States and the Organisation of African Unity in general.

The National Executive Committee of the ANC takes this opportunity to pay warm tribute to the British Anti-Apartheid Movement for its consistent leadership of the British people in opposition to the connivance of the ruling circles of this country with the genocidal apartheid regime of South Africa. Your movement, acting in concert with the rapidly expanding 'Free South Africa Movement' in the United States, has fully exposed the bankruptcy of the policies pursued by the Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan Administrations designed to protect the Botha regime from effective international isolation, including the imposition of comprehensive, mandatory economic sanctions. Yet this remains the unshakeable demand of our people.

We must maintain constant vigilance to defeat the deceitful manoeuvres of these imperialist administrations and of groupings such as the EEC, as reflected in the just concluded visits by the British Foreign Secretary to South and Southern Africa.

Dear Comrades,

As we congratulate the South African Communist Party on its 65th anniversary, we call on all democratic anti-racist forces at home and abroad, committed to fight for the destruction of the criminal apartheid system, to unite as never before. The road we still have to travel may be difficult and bloody, but it will be made shorter exactly by the fact that we will proceed along its length as a united force.

Long live the SACP!
Long live the anti-fascist alliance between the ANC and the SACP!
Long live the unity of all democratic, anti-racist forces!

65TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY

Speech by Joe Slovo, Chairman of the South African Communist Party

When South African communists met in Cape Town 65 years ago they planted the first seed in our continent of Africa of a class party of the working people guided by Marxism-Leninism .

The founding congress of the African National Congress had already taken place in Bloemfontein nine years earlier than ours. It brought into existence the first

modern national liberation movement in Africa. Over the years the mood and thinking of this representative of the most nationally oppressed and degraded section of our people has exercised a considerable influence on the mood and thinking of our Party.

Thus, class exploitation and national oppression - the two most salient and interdependent realities of South Africa's socio-economic structure - became the sources of two complementary streams of revolutionary consciousness and revolutionary organisation. In our conditions these streams constitute the main tributaries which swell the river of struggle, accelerating its flow towards a meaningful victory.

Our anniversary happens to occur in a year punctuated with important Jubilees which, in combination, form a mosaic of a large slab of a people's history of South Africa.

The 200th anniversary of the birth of King Moshoeshoe in 1986 and the 80th anniversary of the crushing of the Bambatha Rebellion in 1906 highlights two patriots who form part of the pantheon of heroes who led the unending struggle by the indigenous people against the foreign conquest.

The 40th anniversary of the 1946 passive resistance campaign and the 25th anniversary of the formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe in 1961 symbolise both the divide and the continuity of the phase of militant mass non-armed defiance and the inevitable evolution of a strategy in which organised, revolutionary violence became an essential ingredient of the political struggle.

The 10th anniversary of the Soweto Uprising in 1976 reminds us of the emergence of organised youth - the young lions - as one of the major social forces in the revolutionary line-up.

The 30th anniversary of the famous women's march on Pretoria in 1956 emphasises the indispensable role of those who carry the unique burden of triple levels of exploitation, as workers, as black workers and as black women workers.

The 1946 black miners' strike, whose 40th anniversary is being commemorated this year, has been described by Toussaint as a distant clap of thunder' which told South Africa that storms of a new kind lay ahead. It signalled a new beginning to the rise of organised black workers' power which has come into its own as part of the people's offensive. And our Party's 65th anniversary underlines the fundamental link between mass revolutionary trade unionism and the long-term political aspirations of our working people towards a society free of exploitation.

Thus, these 1986 anniversaries symbolise the traditions of early resistance, the changing strategies of our struggle and the main social forces in the revolutionary camp - the workers and the organised youth and women.

When our Party was born, the back of the centuries-old tribal armed resistance to the foreign conquest had only recently been broken. The new forces of change - especially the black working class - were not yet fully developed. Today, 65 years later, the years of growth and struggle have moulded a working class which is the main pivot of the social forces moving inexorably towards the overthrow of the tyranny.

Anniversaries are notorious as occasions for self-adulation. They tend to encourage uncritical appraisals of the role played during the lifespan being celebrated. I don't want to present the history of our Party as an uninterrupted chronicle of unerring political interventions. We are a product of history and, mistakes apart, the varied phases of our growth reflect also the objective limitations imposed by the different phases of South Africa's socio-economic development. It took some time for us to shed the baggage of our origins in the white labour movement with which we began our journey in 1921. Like many Communist Parties, we also experienced moments when the dead hand of bureaucratic elitism, and a less than perfect application of Leninist principles, led to a few serious departures from internal democratic norms. It was to take some years for the strategic implications of the relationship between class and national struggle to be more adequately synthesised as, we believe, was achieved by our 5th Congress meeting in Johannesburg in underground conditions in 1962.

A constructively-frank examination of certain phases in our growth and development (discussed in books by the Simons', Bunting and Harmel) would undoubtedly uncover a few more self-critical insights. But, on this occasion, let me not overdo the *meae culpa*e either. For it is abundantly clear that the main thrust of our role and contribution over the 65 years has carved out for our Party an honoured position not only as an independent representative of the class aspirations of our working people, but also as an indispensable constituent of the broad liberation front.

It is not out of place on an occasion such as this to remind ourselves that certain positions which are now regarded as commonplace in both the working class and national movement were pioneered and fought for by our Party. For many decades after our foundation we stood alone as a non-racial political party embracing every section of our people. The very concept of majority rule was propagated first by our Party. This was in 1929 (under the slogan of a Black Republic) at a time when authority regarded the mere mention of voting rights for blacks as the worst treason and when the national movement itself had not yet reached out for this objective. From the middle of the Twenties to the late Sixties communists stood virtually alone in the endeavour to build a trade union movement as an instrument of

economic struggle and as a key sector of the mass revolutionary alliance. And, in a country in which raw nationalism is a natural response to unending racist barbarities it has been our Party which first raised the perspectives of internationalism which linked the mass democratic struggle with movements in all parts of the world working for democracy and for national and social emancipation. And we can claim the dubious honour of being the first political organisation to be driven underground in 1950, two years after the present regime came to power.

But perhaps one of our most signal achievements in the 65 years of our existence has been a truly indigenous elaboration of the theory of the South African revolution. This theory has increasingly informed revolutionary understanding in the ranks of the broader working class and national movement. It has also helped sharpen revolutionary practice. Traditionally, imperialist teaching tends to place Africa outside history until it is 'discovered' by outsiders. We in South Africa were, in that sense, certainly not discovered. We had to discover ourselves. We had to find a South African path.

The search for a path which leads to revolutionary understanding does not end with a religious vision, illuminating eternal truths. It is a process which is never completed because our starting point, the theory of Marxism-Leninism, is a tool and not a mathematical formula. It belongs to no one people. It is as much native to Africa as to every other continent. And if this tool is to do its job properly, it has to be shaped and moulded to the objective conditions of struggle which, in turn, are continually on the move.

Lenin, in his famous address to the young communists of the University of the Peoples of the East, said: 'There is no communist book in which you will find all the answers to your problems'. He did not mean that Marxism contains no universal framework. He was insisting that its specific application has to be unendingly elaborated by revolutionaries who combine a grasp of its essence with a profound study of their own concrete situation and their struggle experiences. If, today, the South African Communist Party can look back with pride at its contribution to the struggle, it is precisely because its history, with all its ups and downs, is a reflection of this process. It is a process which did not unfold in a vacuum, and, more especially, it is one which cannot be separated from the emergence and growth of the African National Congress and the relationship which developed between the communist and national movements.

What explains the special intensity with which the relationship between our two organisations is now being savaged by Botha and his friends? It is partly because even the most pig-headed of our opponents have begun to realise that, sooner or later, they will have to reckon with the ANC which, in the eyes of the greater part of the black population, has little, if any, competition as the alternative power in our land. Since there is no way in which the ANC can be put aside, the only

remaining option is to divide it, to change it from within and to blunt the edge of its revolutionary nationalism. The device used is as old as the comic book itself; a crude projection of foreign-controlled 'reds' (some of them naturally colonels in the KGB!) manipulating so-called nationalists. And in their book, of course, a true nationalist is someone who, even when faced with a gun, never gives up his begging bowl; one who is ever-ready to provide a docile black face as a front for maintaining the kind of Western interests and values which have for so long ravaged our continent.

Since our Party, and more particularly its relationship with the ANC, has become the spectre which, more and more, appears to haunt our ruling class and its external allies, a few words about this relationship are appropriate.

The alliance between the Communist Party and the ANC has no secret clauses. Only those who have other axes to grind or who are victims of the stereotype image of communists and Communist Parties, see in this relationship a sinister white-anting process. It is precisely because it has always been based on a complete respect for the independence and integrity of the internal democratic processes of both organisations, that the alliance has continued to flourish despite unending onslaughts against it from many quarters.

A speculative numbers game is now being played, whose objective is to spot the communists in the National Executive Committee of the ANC. It is instructive to note that inside the country exactly the same game is being played by the regime, but this time in relation to the ANC allegedly using mass organisations such as the UDF and Cosatu as a front. This is clearly directed against these mass organisations just as the communist bogey is exploited in an attempt to weaken the major force of our liberation alliance - the ANC. Ominous inferences are invited because of our refusal to join in this game of which the late Senator Joe McCarthy was such a staunch apostle.

Those who know something of our history will also know that co-operation between the ANC and the SACP began long before they were both driven underground. During the days of legality neither communists who were also active in the ANC nor ANC members who were active in the CP, had reason to hide their political identities. Subsequent demands of clandestinity closed this chapter on open membership inside the country both for the Party and the ANC; an approach which, for obvious reasons, has been adopted by all illegal movements, communists or otherwise.

Unlike the ANC, our Party has no external diplomatic presence requiring an exposure of a collective leadership face which, in our case, would undoubtedly become a main target of the enemy's extended murderous arm.

But, at the end of the day, it is not our anonymity which they fear but rather our publicly proclaimed policy positions on the main content of our struggle, the forces which need to be gathered to bring it to fruition, and the beacons we have illuminated of a South Africa which is liberated in the true meaning of the term. This is their real nightmare with the graphics provided by the workers and youth who are defiantly unfurling the Party's red nag next to that of the ANC in most of the centres of conflict, thereby expressing their approval of the alliance and the policies which underpin it.

In general, capitalist exploitation and race domination are not symbiotically linked. But the historically-evolved connection between capitalist exploitation and racist domination in South Africa creates a natural link between national liberation and social emancipation; a link which is virtually too late to unravel. An increasing awareness of this link by more and more of our working people is evidenced by the growing popularity of our Party. It was also dramatically emphasised in a recent poll (reported in the Financial Mail 20.9.85) in which 77% of urban blacks expressed themselves in favour of socialism.

In South African conditions you don't have to be a doctrinaire Marxist-Leninist to believe that a liberation which deals only with a rearrangement of the voting system and leaves undisturbed the white race monopoly of 99% of our major productive resources, is no liberation at all. All you have to be is an honest black nationalist to understand that political domination has been the device to protect economic privilege and domination. This perhaps explains why, in our conditions, it has been such a short hop from black nationalism to communism for some of the greatest figures in our national movement, among them revolutionary giants like Nzula, Nkosi, Marks, Kotane, Mabhida and Dadoo.

We believe that the kind of victory to be aimed for in the coming struggles must provide a launching-pad for the creation of conditions which will make it possible to work for a socialist future. But this is a process which is too often oversimplified by the rhetorical flamboyance of a number of our critics on the far left who want to take us back to the days when our Party's simplistic sloganising of 'class against class' kept it in splendid isolation from the national movement and the black working population.

The main thrust and content of the immediate struggle continues to revolve around the Freedom Charter which provides a minimum platform for uniting all classes and groups for the achievement of a non-racial, united democratic South Africa based on the rule of the majority. Implicit in such a democratic victory will be the immediate need to begin directing the economy in the interests of the people as a whole. This must obviously involve immediate state measures on the land question and against the giant monopoly complexes which dominate mining, banking and industry. As things stand we have the astonishing position of four companies

(Anglo American, Sanlam, SA Mutual and Rembrandt) between them controlling 80% of the companies quoted on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange.

Partial measures to redistribute wealth - a step which even the Anglo American tycoon Gavin Relly thinks might be necessary, albeit in a truncated form - do not in themselves point to a socialist direction. In expressing support for the Freedom Charter our 1962 Programme states that it is not a programme for socialism but rather a 'common programme for a free, democratic South Africa, agreed on by socialists and non-socialists'. At the same time, the Programme insists, the Freedom Charter will also provide a basis for an advance to a socialist future. In practice, the question as to which road South Africa will begin to take on the morning after the liberation flag is raised over Union Buildings, will be decided by the actual correlation of class forces which have come to power.

But we are not there yet, and the most important task facing us all - communists and non-communists - is to complete this part of the journey. Today, that road certainly looks shorter. But, for all that, its complexities have multiplied. A brief look at some of these complexities will show that at least on the surface there are some ingredients which stand in contradiction with one another.

It is imperative to create the broadest possible front of struggle against the racist autocracy. And a front, by definition, contains disparate forces. The ANC-led liberation alliance, representing the main revolutionary forces, is clearly the key sector of this front. But, particularly in the recent period, the crisis has thrown up a variety of other groupings (including recent defectors from the white laager) which favour a far-reaching shift away from apartheid, but which do not necessarily share the ANC's more radical objectives. Although these forces for change are not part of the revolutionary forces, they obviously contribute to the weakening of the main enemy and some of them are clearly part of the opposition line-up.

At the same time there must be no ambiguity about the primary place which the ANC occupies in this line-up and, broadly speaking, the immediate future can only be positively determined under its umbrella. We therefore reject the oft-repeated claim by Botha and some of his Western allies that, in relation to those who represent black aspirations, the ANC is merely one among equals. This is a device designed to weaken the main propellant of the coming transformation so as to ensure that a form of power sharing will be apportioned in a way which will not lead to a real loss of control by those who wield it at the moment.

Even within the narrower confines of what could be described as the main revolutionary force, we should not overlook the fact that it represents an alliance of different classes and strata (overwhelmingly black) which suffer varying degrees of national oppression and economic exploitation. And although they may all subscribe to the slogan of People's Power, they cannot be expected to share exactly the same vision about its content and the future.

The slogan of People's Power must therefore be accompanied by an awareness that we are not dealing with an undifferentiated black mass. The most consistent guarantor of genuine liberation is the black working class, which has the smallest stake in the status quo and the least motivation for substituting black faces for white ones in the seats of exploitation. It is for this reason that both the ANC and the Party emphasise the dominant role of the working people in the coalition of class forces which constitute the liberation front.

But unlike the ANC, which does not and should not commit itself exclusively to the aspirations of a single class, the Party owes allegiance solely to the working people. And it is our prime function both as an independent Party and as part of the alliance to assert and jealously safeguard the dominant role of this class whose aspirations we represent. In our book this does not imply that the Party itself must seek to occupy the dominant position in the liberation alliance. On the contrary, if correct leadership of the democratic revolution requires the strengthening of the national movement as the major and leading mass organisational force, then this is precisely the way in which a party exercises its vanguard role in the real and not the vulgar sense of the term.

It should also be stressed that the participation of workers (whether communist or non-communist) in the national movement itself and the role played by an independent radical trade union movement like Cosatu are very much part of the process of asserting the role of the workers. But we reject the organisational populism of those who see the shop floor as the only terrain of class struggle and who counterpose the Party and the trade union movement as competitive organs for the political leadership of the working class. We are at one with Jay Naidoo, General Secretary of Cosatu, when he said: 'Organised workers (in the trade union movement) are not representatives of the working class as a whole, but they constitute its most powerful weapon'. (*South African Labour Bulletin*, April 1986, p39). The representative of the working class as a whole is a political vanguard which we claim to be; a title which is of course earned by the calibre of leadership on the ground and not by mere proclamation.

A question which is intimately connected with all this is the hardy perennial - the so-called 'two stage theory' of the South African revolution. Our detractors claim that our preoccupation with the national democratic objectives of the immediate anti-racist struggle has led to an abandonment of socialist objectives. We are alleged to believe that in the interests of the popular alliance, the working class should not assert its primacy and should forget all about socialist perspectives until apartheid has been overthrown; a scenario which would leave the way open for the revolution to be hijacked by exploiters with black faces who will ensure that it is stopped in its tracks.

It seems to be the unfortunate fate of a party such as ours (to which, I suppose, by now we should have become accustomed) to be at one and the same time accused

by the Bothas of taking over the ANC in order to drive it towards communism, and, by other critics, of being taken over by the ANC which is driving us towards nationalism.

Revolution is a continuing process. Although it inevitably goes through strategic and tactical phases, there is no Chinese wall between them; the ingredients of the later phase must already have begun to mature in the womb of the earlier. This is our approach to the relationship between the national democratic and socialist objectives of our revolution. I have already touched on the dominant role of the workers in the present alliance of class forces and on our continued devotion to the spread of socialist perspectives and more particularly an understanding of the ultimate link between national liberation and social emancipation. But this does not imply that the motor of the immediate struggle can be effectively fuelled by the slogan of a socialist republic. The emphasis on the struggle for a democratic transformation along the lines of the Freedom Charter is deeply rooted in present reality.

The speed of recent events has made it more urgent to address a number of issues connected with this democratic transformation which are arousing public discussion. I want to touch briefly on a few of these issues.

The fate of the minorities (by which is really meant the white minority) looms larger than ever in the pronouncements of those who for so long had been impervious to the fate of the majority. Our policy and, more importantly, our practice, has been consistent with the opening words of the Freedom Charter that 'South Africa belongs to all who live in it - black and white'. We believe that this can only be assured in one united South Africa based on the will of the majority. This is our irreversible starting point.

Equality must be between individuals (if need be, safeguarded by a constitutional mechanism) and not between race or ethnic groups as such. Ethnic parity is a recipe for ethnic domination. The concept of group identity based on race (which trades under various names such as federalism, consociation, etc) is an apartheid formula for the perpetuation of race and ethnic exclusiveness.

The emphasis on the single source of sovereignty based on the will of the majority democratically expressed, is not in conflict with the delegation of certain powers to regional authorities. This occurs in every unitary state. The emphasis on one united democratic South Africa is certainly no threat to the historically-evolved cultural and linguistic heritage of the various groupings which constitute the South African nation in the making.

Unity does not exclude diversity. The regime has used tribal ethnicity and even Afrikaner-English differences to make a ladder of ascendancy over a divided people. The founding-fathers of the ANC in 1912 declared that its primary task

would be the creation of a common African consciousness. This process, which has already come a long way, can only be completed in a united democratic South Africa. Such a South Africa will, at the same time, be enriched by all that is healthy in the cultural and linguistic heritage of the different groupings, including that part of the Afrikaners heritage which is not rooted in racism.

Among the projections being debated in the economic sphere, is the relation between private and social property in the phase immediately following majority rule. How do we reconcile two imperatives; the need to begin bringing about changes in the relations of production in the direction of economic egalitarianism, and the need to meet the people's economic requirements and expectations? We believe that, in the long term, there is harmony between these two imperatives; indeed the one is a necessary condition for the other. But enough experiences have been accumulated of disastrous great leaps forward to teach us to be wary of baking slogans rather than bread during the transition phase.

Let me be explicit. For some while after apartheid falls there will undoubtedly be a mixed economy, implying a role for levels of non-monopoly private enterprise represented not only by the small racially oppressed black business sector but also by managers and business people of goodwill who have or are prepared to shed racism. It can only be an indigenous representative of the disastrous Pol Pot philosophy who can project a pole-vault into socialism and communism the day after overthrow of white rule. If the political domination of the old ruling class is ended and the new state apparatus is constructed within the framework envisaged by the Freedom Charter, the existence of a mixed economy 'controlled' in the words of the Charter 'to assist the well-being of the people', will facilitate rather than hinder the continuing drive towards a socialist future; a drive which, within a truly democratic framework, could well be settled in debate rather than on the streets.

In the meanwhile, mass political struggle coupled with an intensification of revolutionary violence remains the imperative. We have never relished the path of violence. But it is plain for all honest observers to see how tightly closed have been all other avenues for meaningful change. Howe's empty-handed retreat from Pretoria has underscored how tightly these avenues continue to be closed. And let me emphasise this: if a real possibility emerges of moving towards the total abolition of apartheid, without escalating violence, there is no sector of our liberation alliance which would reject such a path or refuse to talk to people of goodwill about how to get there. In present circumstances to expect of the ANC-led liberation alliance to unilaterally abandon violence is to ask it to abandon the people's aspirations. The absence of violence is dependent on the presence of democracy. In any case, it is difficult to think of an example in history of a movement going to the negotiating table having abandoned the very tactic which has played such an important role in getting the enemy to sit around it.

It is the ANC and its allies who have faith in the democratic process and not Botha. It is we who want a political framework in which the will of the majority can express itself through normal democratic procedures. It is Botha who bans political opposition, keeps the people's leaders in gaol and threatens bigger and better massacres and emergencies to prevent the attainment of democracy which he clearly equates with a form of national suicide. And it is apartheid's Western allies who are increasing the prospects of massive blood-letting by standing in the way of effective action by the international community.

The argument is advanced that a wounded economy will be an obstacle to peaceful reform of the system; a process which they claim will be more assured in conditions of economic stability and growth.

If anything, our experience of the last twenty years proves the exact opposite. South Africa's most dramatic period of economic advance between 1967 and 1976 was also a period during which more was done than at any other time in our history to implement the worst features of apartheid and a period when the mounting repression reached its climax in the 1976 Soweto Uprising. Conversely, it has been during the last ten years of the most severe and long-lasting recession in South Africa's history that the regime has been constrained to move away from at least some of the fringes of apartheid.

There can be little doubt that the catalyst for this has been mounting internal action and increasing external isolation, and has nothing at all do so with the economic arguments advanced. Indeed, these economic arguments are really moving in a bizarre direction; from the same political stable which prophesied that punitive sanctions would lead to a state of chaos which would hold back reform, we now hear that sanctions ought to be opposed because they will strengthen the economy by forcing self-sufficiency on Pretoria.

In the further alternative, we are also told by those who constructively engage on the side of the regime, that their opposition to real sanctions is motivated by a desire to avoid inflicting suffering on the very blacks whom they wish to help. As we know, the objects of their so-called concern are overwhelmingly in favour of sanctions and, in any case, are heartily sick of being told yet again, what is good for them by those unable to shed an imperial mentality. Can there be any doubt that the people whom Reagan and Thatcher would really like to help are the Bothas? Their stance has nothing whatsoever to do with the balance of suffering, but everything to do with the balance of profit.

These, then, are the self-proclaimed champions of 'human rights'. They never stop whining about Soviet influence in our struggle. Let me emphasise (however much it might stick in their gullets) that we in South Africa share the experience of virtually every other liberation movement in the world, of the most consistent and generous support from the Soviet Union and the other socialist nations. Today our

cause is becoming more fashionable and we are gratefully gathering more friends. But neither we nor our people will forget or allow themselves to be separated from those who have been consistently with them from the very beginning. This includes our African brothers who have sacrificed so much in support of our struggle.

And among those who also always stood in the front line of support for our cause, were our comrades in the communist and workers' parties in all parts of the world, more especially those who are today sharing our platform.

The uninterrupted upsurge, which can be dated from August 1984, is not a passing phenomenon. It undoubtedly holds out the promise of some really basic transformation. The interrelated economic and political crisis of South Africa's ruling class is not diminishing; in important areas it daily grows more acute. And the factors which usually combine to set the scene for a revolutionary advance are beginning to come together. Firstly, the ruling class has virtually conceded that it can no longer rule in the old way. The divisions within the power bloc are deepening, as racist politicians and white businessmen thrash about in a desperate search for a way to share power without giving up control. Secondly, it is crystal clear that the people are no longer prepared to be ruled in the old way. By their actions they have already rendered ungovernable most of the urban levels of administration and replaced these with embryos of popular power. Botha's nine-day wonder, the Tri-cameral parliament, has sunk into virtual oblivion. Even more important, growing numbers of our workers and youth are showing a readiness to sacrifice even their lives in the struggle for an end to racist tyranny. Thirdly, the ANC and the liberation front which it heads, is regarded by friend and foe alike as the vanguard which occupies first place in the allegiance of the overwhelming majority of the mass of the oppressed.

In addition, the massive build-up of international revulsion against Botha's Hitlerian tyranny is reaching one of its highest points. It has its roots in the heroism and rising intensity of our people's resistance. In this day and age there is no struggle which can be separated from the international context, but in the case of South Africa the international factor plays a unique role; because the evil of apartheid, like no other issue, cuts across the world ideological divide. The international isolation of South Africa can therefore make a special contribution towards a less painful and speedier outcome.

We do not discount the enemy's virtually irreversible trench mentality which Botha once again exposed in his response to the EPG and now to Howe's useless effort. Nor should we underestimate the internal and external resources which the regime can still muster in an attempt to keep the majority from opening the gates of political power. But, at the same time, the possibility of a people's breakthrough is growing stronger by the day. It follows, therefore, that while continuing to focus our sights on a protracted conflict we must also prepare and be ready to adjust

them to a much swifter transformation involving insurrectionary ingredients.

Comrade Chairman,

Looking back on our 65 years we can be proud of the impact our Party has made. But this impact has not been just as a stimulant for the elaboration of theoretical perspectives for the South African revolution.

Our Party and individual communists have won their political place by dedication and sacrifice to the revolutionary cause in the actual arena of struggle. There is no phase of our struggle which does not have its communist heroes and martyrs; revolutionaries who watered the tree of freedom with their very blood. Today on our 65th Anniversary we dip our red banner for these communists and other revolutionaries who gave their all in the cause of freedom, in the cause of socialism.

Today, on the 65th Anniversary of our Party - described by Oliver Tambo as one of the great pillars of our struggle - the South African masses are on the move as never before in our history. We pledge and vow to help finish the job.

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