

SACP BRANCH(CAPE CENTRAL)

Letter of resignation ; THEO MOLAABA (SEC. KTC b4)

Comrades, it is unfortunate that my resignation comes at a time when our Party has become more popular even to the political section of the working people. It is also unfortunate to coincide with that of renegades and opportunistic political bandits like Joe Mathews and Co.

This resignation is not only a personal position but, I hope it is also a political position. Of course there is element of bitterness, emotions and anger on my part, however this has not and does not cloud my political objectivity (sobriety) or rather my subjective view about the trend which is gradually developing in the Party. These emotions are a human, rational and satisfied response to certain set of conditions (as I perceive them). More essentially there is nothing absolute about my resignation, and reasons thereof. Precisely because any political position its correctness or truth is a product property of specific and particular conditions, sum total of those conditions as analysed. Conditions, like matter are inherently in constant motion. This makes any truth or correct position to be relative. In this regard so is my resignation and reason thereof. If practice proves me to be wrong I will unfoilingly reconsider my position and go back to the trenches in the party, a Marxist-Leninist Party.

My resignation must not be seen as a flight from reality and more specifically from challenges facing the Party, and the alliance broadly i.e limited financial resources, building and sustaining branches, failure to concretely marry negotiations with the mass nature of the National Liberation, problems of lack of fulltime leadership for the party, anti-communist hysteria and many others. Since I joined the Party together with my comrades we have been more than willing to battle with these difficulties. In this struggle to root the Party under new conditions we have been guided by the fact that humanity or persons make history under conditions they find themselves in, not those that they have chosen, this is a Marxian approach.

On the other hand my resignation is over THEORY AND PRACTICE: gradual abandonment of Marxist-Leninist principles without enough theoretical formulations. Its abandonment of PROLETARIAN ATTITUDE towards armed struggle, negotiations, the alliance and the role of the Party in that context, as an independent force. Secondly over failure to be true to the decisions in resolutions of the seventh and eighth Party Congress; our perspective on insurrection and its relation to negotiations in the struggle for seizure of the state power. This dialectical relations have completely been under so negotiations have become an end itself. Thirdly the failure of our Party to criticise and contest with the ANC in public

I am probably in an excellent position to comment on Comrade Theo Molaba's letter of resignation as I have only met him once and that too was for only a brief while. This frees me of judging the contents of the letter by association and by preconceived notions of Comrade Theo's politics or practice in the Party.

I have taken the letter more seriously after the branch meeting of 24/6/93, when I discovered that Theo represented a majority view in the branch. That many members, particularly (but not only) the students in the branch, described the same frustrations and criticisms of the Party as did Theo's letter.

This, as we are all aware, is not only a feature in our branch and Party, but in the entire movement. More specifically, a number of tendencies are clearly emerging within our movement.

Notably, the tendency of "militants" represented by Gwala, Mokaba, Winnie and Yengeni, is gaining wider appeal amongst rank and file youth and reaches out to broader layers in some regions. A second tendency which has expressed dissatisfaction with the negotiations process and the strategy of the Alliance is the the advanced sections of the ANC YL and COSAS. (I would like to separate this latter sector with the former). A third and probably more crucial development in the vein is shaping up in the unions. The latest NUMSA resolution to terminate the alliance once the ANC comes to power, represents the view that an ANC government firstly will have to be kept in check, and secondly will not advance to full democracy and socialism.

All of these political tendencies point to a frustration and dissatisfaction with the negotiations period and the lack of leadership - for them - from the ANC and SACP. Other factors such as the violence in the case of Cde Gwala have played a role in shaping a militant politics and a complete dissatisfaction on questions related to arming our forces.

There is one other tendency which we would like to describe which is as subtle as it pervasive within the SACP. This is the followers of a dogmatic Marxism Leninism. It is this dogma which has resulted in an inability for the Party to articulate a new politics and a new role in the present period. In my opinion, this dogma was represented by the refusal by the Eighth Congress to adopt the slogan of democratic socialism and to build the programme of the Party out of the broad science of Marxism instead of the narrowest conceptions of Leninism.

Whilst these two slogans are relatively unimportant in themselves, they represent a dogmatic fixation with the one party state (expressed as the disallowance of bourgeois

parties); dictatorship of the proletariat, nationalisation and insurrection.

This is a negative tendency and has, on occasion, had more to do with what is fashionable. This is also the food of the demagogues who made good use of it at the Eighth Congress and thereafter.

Comrade Theo's letter falls into a fifth category. Comrade Theo has not made up his mind about negotiations. He is still not sure that whether we should be negotiating or building and preparing for the insurrection. All of us have at some time fallen into this category in the last three years. When the Inkathagate scandal broke, I remember arguing for a major offensive against Buthelezi and the regime. "Now is the time," I was saying, to break of the talks and mount an offensive. For Natalians this had real meaning. The opportunity was lost!

For me, this is the nub of the matter. I want to deal with this dilemma - negotiations or insurrection - and offer a strategic perspective which binds this apparently contradictory strategies in a paradigm. Then I want to point out the challenges facing the left elements in the SACP in the coming period.

Before doing this, I want to flag important criticisms that Cde Theo has made of the Party and its leadership. The first, and most important in my opinion, is what Theo calls the 'abandonment of the Proletarian Attitude' of the Party. I would prefer to call this the inability (and even reluctance) to build a FIGHTING PARTY. This, for me is the essence of Leninism. A fighting party with a well coordinated nerve centre and a well oiled machinery which takes on and strikes blows on the ruling class at every turn. For instance, our Party should be building and mounting an offensive on the right wing at the present moment. Especially as their show of force takes place so soon after this same right wing murdered the best of our leaders - our General Secretary - just under three months ago.

Comrade Theo himself sites the failure of our leadership and our Party as a whole to drive the mass struggle after Inkathagate, Boipatong, Bisho. For this problem I cannot suggest a solution and am in agreement with the comrade resignee.

The second criticism, and this is partly linked to the first, is that of tailism. The Party is tailing the ANC. Or as Theo puts it 'The Party is a sub-committee of the ANC NEC.'

I can understand the sentiment being expressed here, but it is more complex than that. Whilst on the one hand the Party's political and policy positions are always identical to that of the ANC and always become public knowledge well after the ANC's; it can be argued that Party members play a crucial role in formulating ANC policy in the first place.

I'm not sure which is worse. If the latter is true, then there is very little to say about the views of these Party comrades who shape ANC policy. There is very little evidence of Marxist thinking or revolutionary politics to the ANC's policies, and it's more worrying that Party members are responsible for this kind of politics.

Secondly on this matter, is that the CST thesis predisposes us to tailism in the stage of NDR. A crude reading of CST makes this tailism wholly compatible and correct.

This is a valid criticism but needs to be formulated more precisely.

Theo also raises other criticisms of the Party, particularly at the last CC report. He calls it 'devoid of class analysis, moral and insulting.' He also criticises the Party for its lack of independence and its inability to defend the Party from attacks from the ANC.

I cannot deal with all these criticisms here.

It is timely for me to make some criticisms of Theo's letter at this stage. The most important criticism is that Theo has not made up his mind on negotiations. Earlier in his letter he argues for a proletarian attitude to negotiations, but latter on he criticises the leadership for failing to 'prepare for an insurrection' immediately after the death of Comrade Chris.

This kind of comment is wholly unhistorical and is a complete misjudgement of the objective conditions, balance of forces and the preparedness of our working class and youth to turn the regime's retreat into a rout.

I suspect that the dogmatism that I described earlier in this response also has a part to play in this fascination with insurrection. Romanticism and youthfulness undoubtedly have a contributory role to play. Unfortunately, our strategy cannot be grounded on these finer sides of the human personality.

Insurrections are not 'good things' as a close friend of mine puts it. It's not fun. In most occasions and in many more to come it is necessary and should never be completely discounted in our strategies for building the Party and the mass struggle. But insurrection now in SA would be a blood

bath, and we would be the ones who are routed (massacred is closer to reality).

The second criticism is that the letter fails to acknowledge the extensive mass action that has taken place over the last three years and particularly, he does not credit the ANC leadership for organising the mass action, although he mentions this very mass activity at least twice.

#### A Strategic Perspective which marries negotiations and the Mass Struggle

Whilst up to the end of 1992 we characterised negotiations as an 'aspect of strategy' or more popularly 'a terrain of struggle,' I believe that this perspective has been eroded as we advanced from Minutes and Accords to Forums. As the negotiations process gained ground and occupied the time and energies of the centre the other terrains of struggle assumed a marginal role in the transition. Millions of people participated in marches and stayaways, but this must be characterised only as mass action and not mass struggle. It lacked any sense of challenging the power relations in our country.

The new strategic perspective that was adopted by the ANC NEC in December 1992 was a culmination of this trend and a turning point for the movement. The new strategic perspective was governed by one central idea. This idea was that the most effective way to solve the South African question was to move as rapidly as possible to democratic elections. An ANC government would have the power to deal with the third force and violence. It would also deal with the right wing and Inkatha and Mangope.

It would also have the power to begin the long march to social and economic reconstruction and start to deliver some of the goods of the new SA.

This new strategic perspective was driven by the most conservative sections of our leadership (Slovo's sunset clauses) and was significantly restrained by the ANC NEC when it adopted the final draft of the New Strategic Perspective document.

Nevertheless, the central idea of the initiators of this perspective prevails - Move rapidly to an ANC government ...even if some compromises are necessary!

As a movement we lack a strategic perspective in the current period which incorporates the role of mass struggle or even mass action. All we have is a strategy for negotiations. I think its a good strategy and our negotiators are doing

surprisingly well at the table - but it is only a strategy for negotiators.

We argue that a new strategic perspective needs to be developed for the transition.

The first element is a clearly defined role for the masses to relate to the negotiations process. I do not believe that every issue that deadlocks the negotiations should be taken to the streets as the effects of turning on and off the tap are well known. There are some occasions where the tap needs to be turned on full power. The two most important issues are the disarming of the right wing and joint effective control of the security forces.

The second plank of a new perspective must centre on the sectoral struggles, particularly health, education, housing, and other important struggles. This must not be "left to the sectoral organisations" but must be driven from the centre of the ANC/SACP/COSATU alliance.

The third and most important plank in a revolutionary strategic perspective is to build dual power wherever power resides in the country, at local, regional and national levels. The organised sections of the masses must engage the points of power in the society and demand and negotiate control over these institutions.

The negotiators amongst our ranks must not lose sight of the need to carry out the agreements that they have been able to win and to defend the gains made at the table. The demobilisation of mass organisation is going to cost us dearly in the coming months.

In conclusion, these ideas can only stimulate a branch meeting and can be quickly lost. The challenge that we face is to build a clear strategic perspective and to champion our ideas within the Party and within the movement. To this end I would like to suggest that the branch offer itself as a platform for the Theo's of the world and guarantee the standing of any majority position as a position of the branch to be championed in the region and nationally.

The challenge facing Theo and other comrades who agree with his criticisms is to come back into the Party and to shape it and fight for our positions in the Party as only Lenin would have done.