

MANIFESTO OF THE
SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY

Building workers' power for democratic change



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Contents

Preamble	1
Section One The Present World Situation.....	2
Section Two South Africa: New Political Realities	8
Section Three The Economic and Social Crisis	12
Section Four The Way Forward	17
Section Five The Role and Character of the SACP	24

SACP MANIFESTO

Preamble

South Africa stands on the threshold of major democratic change. Years of struggle and sacrifice in the face of the most vicious repression have brought our country to this point. It is, above all, the working people of our country who have been in the forefront of struggle.

The South African Communist Party has a long history as the political vanguard of the working class, basing itself on the guiding principles of Marxism-Leninism. Our Party has greater support and a larger organised membership than at any time in its 70 year history. We note this with pride and, above all, with a sense of the duty that it implies.

Our country stands on the threshold of change, but the threshold has still not been crossed.

The working masses of our country have very basic aspirations. They want jobs and food, they want reasonable family housing, they want land, they want the chance to learn and free health care.

Above all, they want the enormous wealth that their labour has produced over the decades to become finally the common property of all South Africans, not something locked away in the rich suburbs, not something squandered by a privileged minority.

Already significant changes are underway in South Africa. These are first important victories for our people. As far as the ruling class in our country is concerned, the present process of change, which they hope to direct and control, must be designed to better stabilise their capitalist system. They hope it will preserve as much of existing privilege and power as possible.

So will this happen? Will the impending process of change in South Africa fail the working class?

NOT IF THE WORKING CLASS, THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF OUR POPULATION, ITSELF PROPELS THIS PROCESS!

This is the perspective that must guide the SACP in the present and future.

**LET US BUILD WORKING CLASS POWER FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE!
FORWARD TO SOCIALISM!**

Section One

The Present World Situation

The balance of world power has changed very rapidly in the last three years. A balance of forces built around two major power blocs, centred on the United States and the Soviet Union, emerged after the Second World War. This two-bloc world system has now more or less collapsed. The imperialist world, led by the United States, has emerged more powerful and confident.

Generally, these developments are not favourable for progressive forces within our own country and, indeed, internationally.

The main reason for the significant and rapid shift in the world balance of power, of course, is:

The collapse of distorted socialism in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union

Any attempt to analyse this crisis needs to base itself, in the first place, on the enormous objective difficulties confronting the socialist project in these countries. Tsarist Russia was the most backward European power at the turn of the century. Socialism in the Soviet Union had to be built in an exceptionally harsh and hostile environment. The new workers' state was compelled to chart a course in the context of a low productive base, mass illiteracy, imperialist invasion, counter-revolution and famine.

From 1948 the socialist countries in eastern Europe, themselves exceptionally backward societies that had been ravaged by the Second World War, were confronted by an aggressive imperialism. The imperialist powers unleashed the cold war, and spent billions of dollars on destabilisation in an effort to "roll back" socialism.

But the awesome difficulties cannot in any way justify the criminal violations of socialist justice, and the stifling bureaucratic, administrative command systems that evolved. The crisis in eastern Europe underlines one important truth: it is not possible to sustain and develop socialism in an authoritarian environment.

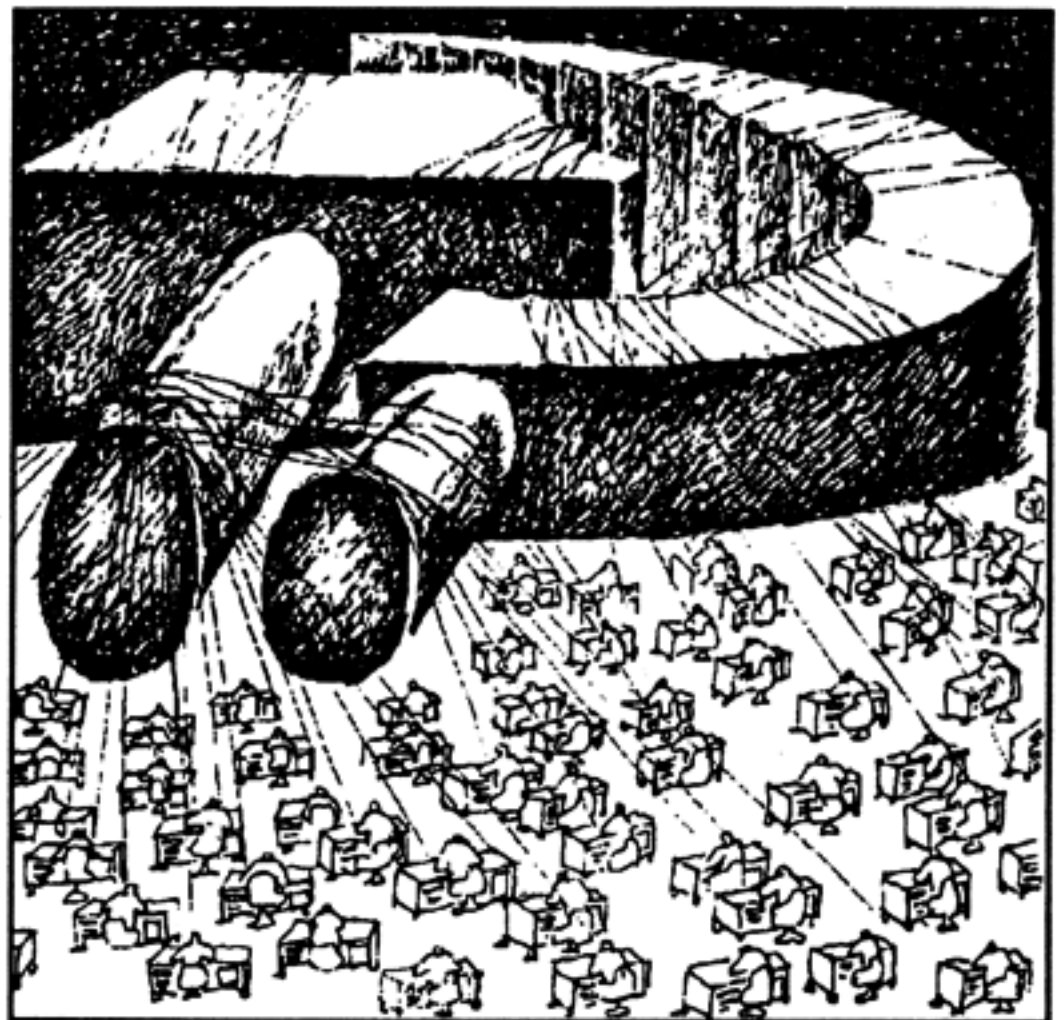
In many of these societies the relationship and differences between the ruling party and the

SACP MANIFESTO

state; the party, state and elected representatives of the people; the party, state and trade unions and other social organisations were blurred and collapsed. Civil society was absorbed into the ambit of party and state politics.

But a thriving socialism requires a whole network of mass democratic formations and organs of popular power. It is only the working masses, organised and mobilised in a wide variety of independent organisations, who can build and sustain a democratic socialist system.

Nevertheless, despite serious weaknesses, positive results were achieved in the socialist countries. In many respects they pioneered the 8-hour working day, free and comprehensive education for all, an affordable public health system, women's equality, full employment and subsidised holidays for workers and their families. It was the Soviet working people who bore the brunt of the Nazi war, and who, at tremendous cost, turned the tide of that war, saving the whole of humanity from possible domination by fascism. And it was the Soviet Union that for decades proved to be a pillar of solidarity for our own liberation struggle and for countless other anti-colonial and anti-imperialist forces.



Bureaucratic practices in the Soviet Union led to an administrative command system which hampered development

Whatever the weaknesses of socialism in eastern Europe, the new capitalist dispensation that is rapidly emerging in many of these countries is bringing little joy to the working majority. Millions of east European workers are now unemployed and they face a bleak future. Women are often the worst hit, and with mass retrenchments and the closing down of publicly funded childcare facilities and canteens they are being driven back into the kitchen. This period has seen the emergence of fascist, racist and national chauvinist forces. But the struggle in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union is far from over. The harsh realities of capitalism will take their toll. The distorted form of socialism in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union has collapsed, but genuine socialist forces are already beginning to reassert themselves. The main force for the progress of humanity remains the transition from capitalism to socialism.

SACP MANIFESTO

The advanced capitalist countries

The existence of a powerful world socialist system generally strengthened the struggle for national liberation, peace, democracy and social progress throughout the world. In many ways the world socialist system acted as a buffer against imperialist aggression. With the disintegration of this world socialist system, the imperialist powers, with US imperialism in the forefront, are acting in an ever more brazen and arrogant manner. At the same time, there are also important shifts occurring within and between the major imperialist powers. There are now three major centres of capitalist accumulation - North America, centred on the US; western Europe, with Germany acting as its economic power-house; and the Pacific Rim, centred on Japan.

In the last decade the relative economic power of these centres is shifting to the disadvantage of the US and in favour of the other two major imperialist centres. The US still remains the most powerful capitalist economy. But Japan and Germany, mainly because they were unfettered by the enormous burden of military spending that the US has taken upon itself, have begun to make significant inroads into the previous US economic domination.

The dominant role of US transnational corporations, for instance, has gradually eroded. In 1974 US transnationals still held about one-half of all direct foreign investments. By 1982 their share was cut to about 40 percent, and by 1989 to about 30 percent. However, the US remains unquestionably the leading imperialist military and political power.

Capitalism in the advanced imperialist countries has proved to be more resilient, more capable of weathering the enormous structural crises into which it has periodically plunged in the twentieth century, than most Marxists originally imagined. Nevertheless, neither its resilience, nor the present crisis of socialism, should blind us to the massive failures of capitalism.

In the advanced capitalist countries 40 million people are unemployed, 100 million live in poverty. In the United States, 3 million people live on the streets, and over 35 million people out of a population of nearly 250 million live in poverty. Wages and social conditions for the US working class have been deteriorating for a period of twenty years. Dire poverty strikes unevenly, with black Americans particularly disadvantaged. One quarter of all black US males between the ages of 19 and 30 are now either in jail or are being processed by the criminal justice system.

Monopoly capitalism has had considerable success in maintaining its political rule in these societies. It has not, however, been able to suppress working class and broad social and political movements which continue to struggle for social justice and peace. Class and popular

SACP MANIFESTO

struggles, taking a variety of forms, will always be a feature of capitalist society. In view of the unfavourable balance of forces internationally, it is more crucial than ever that South African communists and our broad democratic movement support these struggles and identify common principles and goals with progressive forces in the advanced capitalist countries.

The third world

It is in the global backyard of imperialism, in the third world, that the failures of capitalism are most obvious.

The countries of the third world, in which the great majority of the world's population lives, have various political and social dispensations. Some openly declare their commitment to capitalism. Others camouflage their capitalism under various names. Still others are genuinely attempting to pursue a progressive path broadly beneficial to the masses. But whatever their political orientation, all are the victims of an imperialist world division of power and wealth. Virtually all are under the domination of the transnationals, the International Monetary Fund, and the constant threat of US military and political destabilisation. In the new world order this imperialist domination is increasing.

The gap between the imperialist centres and the third world has not only persisted over the last decade, but for most third world countries it has widened.

The major reason for the plight of third world countries is the crippling drain of wealth out of these countries to the transnational corporations and banks of the rich capitalist countries. The advanced capitalist countries have manipulated world markets to ensure that the world price of most commodities exported by third world countries has steadily declined. At the same time the prices of commodities which the third world is forced to purchase from the advanced capitalist countries have shot up.

The foreign debt of third world countries has grown dramatically over the last decade. In fact, it has now reached such proportions that it is unpayable. The effect of all of these factors is that the third world, which urgently needs capital, has been a net exporter of capital for the past decade. It is estimated that between \$70 and \$100 billion a year is being sucked out of these poverty ridden countries by the rich imperialist powers. In Africa between 1980 and 1986 \$40 billion was paid to the industrialised world.

Bare statistics can hardly begin to reflect the real devastation that this imperialist world system is wreaking. Economies are being destroyed. In the 1980s in Africa, the average income per person fell by one quarter. At present 30 million people on our continent face starvation.

SACP MANIFESTO

Some 80 million children under the age of five die each year in third world countries of diseases that are not normally fatal in rich countries.

Imperialism's answer to this crisis is to tighten its stranglehold. As a condition for any capital from the imperialist countries, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank impose what they call "structural adjustment programmes". These involve the devaluation of local currencies, the removing of price controls on basic goods, and cuts in government spending. These measures have failed to revive economic growth and they have tended to undo what little development there was in most third world countries. The collapse of a distorted form of socialism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union has had a devastating impact on the more progressive third world states. It has made them more vulnerable to the pressures of imperialism and put their social programmes and independence into jeopardy.

There are, of course, many differences in levels of development and wealth among third world countries. In some there is virtually no modern industrial infrastructure. In other countries, sometimes called "semi-peripheral" societies, there is a relatively advanced and relatively extensive capitalist infrastructure (including a significant industrial proletariat) **combined with** many features of typical third world underdevelopment. Societies with these contradictory features include Brazil, South Korea and South Africa.

It is no accident that these countries, occupying a particular and contradictory position within the imperialist world division of labour, have been the sites of some of the most intense mass and working class struggles in the 1980s. In some respects, these societies constitute a weak link in the world imperialist chain.

New world challenges - socialism is more relevant than ever

There is no doubt that the changed international balance of power makes this a harsher and more difficult world for the majority of its inhabitants. Emboldened by the new situation the imperialist powers with the United States in the lead are attempting to impose a so-called new world order. They are evermore brazenly trying to impose their will using military aggression and economic, political and ideological pressures. Intense pressure is also being mounted on socialist countries. The efforts of those socialist countries, among them Cuba, to consolidate socialism and to take on board the lessons of the distortions which have led to the collapse of socialism in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union must be supported by progressive forces world wide.

The pressures of the peace forces throughout the world saw the 1980s ushering in the end of the cold war. This opened up possibilities for peaceful resolution of regional and internal

SACP MANIFESTO

conflicts. This also diminished the threat of a nuclear holocaust and led to the process of limiting the arms race.

But there are also new threats to the survival of human civilisation. The most serious of these is the destruction of our environment. Voracious and uncontrolled capitalist as well as short-sighted bureaucratic socialist exploitation of our natural resources has inflicted major damage to the world's ecological system. Urgent measures, and world-wide international co-operation is imperative.

There are other major international problems - hunger, disease, including the dramatic and deadly spread of the AIDS virus. These, too, require effective world-wide co-operation and well-funded collective action.

Today our class enemies are crowing over the crisis in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Imperialists, free marketeers, the izimbongi of private profit and class exploitation, are all proclaiming socialism "a thing of the past". But it is these bosses and their lackeys who belong to the past. It is they who have no real answers to the real challenges of the 1990s.

Can they please explain to us how the free market, how private capitalists each pursuing their own selfish interests will solve the AIDS crisis, or hunger, homelessness and unemployment or the threat to our environment? If capitalism is the answer, then why is the most powerful and the most wealthy capitalist country on earth, the United States, so incapable of providing the most basic human needs to all its people? And what answer does imperialism have to the widening gap that it itself is causing between the advanced first world countries and the impoverished third world?

At this time of crisis in the socialist world, the need for international solidarity becomes more pressing than ever. The SACP pledges itself to spare no effort in helping to bring together other Communist Parties and all left and democratic forces to share problems and perspectives on the current period and the way forward.

Capitalism has failed humanity. The reins of economic and political power must be placed under the democratic ownership and control of the working people of the world. Until such time, our world will continue to be a world of plenty in the midst of mass hunger, disease and poverty. ★

Section Two

South Africa: New Political Realities

The new political situation in our country is the result of major developments and a changed balance of forces internationally, within the southern African region, and inside South Africa itself. These changes are complex and contradictory in character. They contain, in different measure, positive and negative features.

Internationally the deep crisis, of the world socialist system has had, and will continue to have, a negative impact on our own struggle. The imperialist bloc is, as we have noted, now more powerful, confident and aggressive. On the other hand (partly linked to the end of the old two bloc, Cold War, world system) there is now a world-wide tendency to settle regional conflicts through political negotiation, and to make relatively peaceful transitions towards greater democracy in formerly highly anti-democratic countries. Imperialism and its local allies hope to use and dominate these transitional processes with a view to stabilising the world capitalist system. However, progressive forces in various parts of the world, including our own, are engaging with these transitional processes as a new terrain of struggle. The present process underway in South Africa has many significant international parallels.

Regionally virtually all the independent states of southern Africa are in deep crisis. There are many factors at play in this crisis. In some cases this crisis has been sharpened by the difficulties of trying to build socialism from an underdeveloped economic base. On occasion subjective errors by the revolutionary forces contributed to the difficulties.

The support and sacrifices of the progressive states of southern Africa to the liberation of Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa has been of great significance.

But the major factor in the regional crisis, overshadowing everything else, has been the Pretoria-led and imperialist backed war of destabilisation. However, the apartheid regime has also paid a high price in conducting this war, and its ability to sustain the war was increasingly being eroded. By 1988 a significant change in the military balance of forces started to emerge in southern Angola. In many ways, the opening of the present phase within our country and

SACP MANIFESTO

within our region begins, not on February 2 1990, but in August 1988 when combined Cuban, Angolan and SWAPO forces delivered a major military defeat to the apartheid army at Cuito Cuanavale.

Within South Africa

The rolling wave of popular mass struggles, the armed struggle and international pressure over the last decades have resulted in sustained growth in the organisation, popularity and power of the liberation movement. These struggles also greatly deepened the international isolation and the internal crisis and splits within the white ruling bloc. By the end of the 1980s various factors both positive and negative in international, regional and national situation created a climate conducive to a negotiated settlement in South Africa.

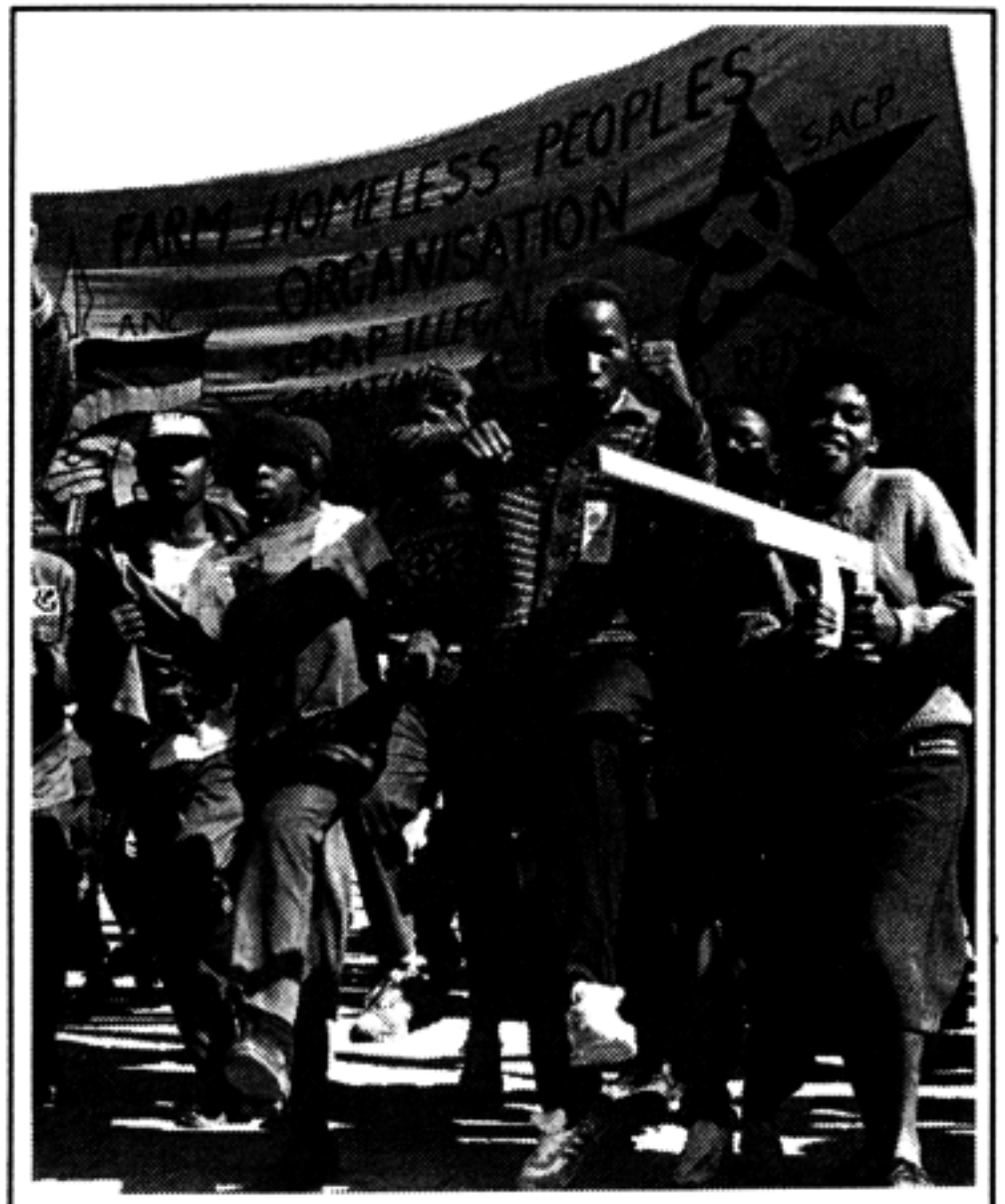
It is the **combination** of these factors which has produced the present political situation within our country. It is a situation in which democratic change through negotiation has become possible.

The apartheid regime now openly concedes that it cannot continue to rule in the same way. This has resulted in significant if partial victories for the national liberation movement:

- the unbanning of the ANC, SACP and other organisations;
- the release of many although not all political prisoners;
- the return of many exiles;
- the scrapping of cornerstone apartheid laws.

However

- the process of democratisation is not irreversible - state power remains in the hands of the white minority : parliament, the judiciary, the bureaucracy, the SABC, and the commanding heights of the army, air-force, navy, police and prison services are all monopolised by the white



Waves of mass action have resulted in the sustained growth of the liberation movement

SACP MANIFESTO

minority. It is this white minority state apparatus that remains the major obstacle to change, and the principal immediate enemy of the national liberation movement. The only real guarantee that the process of transition is not reversed lies in continued organised mass mobilisation, and all-round pressure on the regime.

- the depth and quality of democratic change is also at stake in the present situation. In fact, the struggle over the character and content of the change is the main feature of the present political situation. In many ways it is a struggle for tactical and strategic initiative. Whoever captures the strategic initiative will best be able to steer the process of change.

For its part the regime, backed by the capitalist ruling class, hopes to manage a process of change that will stabilise and lend legitimacy to a South Africa in which existing minority power and privilege are minimally affected, and, above all, in which the capitalist order is not threatened. To this end they have developed an economic strategy designed to unilaterally restructure the economy in order to safeguard accumulated privileges of big capital. Amongst other things this strategy includes privatisation and restructuring the tax system to shift the burden even more onto the working class.

The present ruling bloc hopes that by conceding basic civil rights it will block the advance of the wider national democratic revolution of our country. To accomplish this, the regime needs, for the moment, to negotiate with the ANC-led alliance. But at the same time it seeks to split the tripartite alliance, weaken the ANC and the broad mass forces. Amongst the weapons it is deploying in this double agenda are

- violence - both indiscriminate violence to sow terror and confusion, to provoke ethnic rivalries and disorganise the broad masses, as well as targeted violence to eliminate key activists.
- disinformation - to provoke demoralisation in our ranks.
- fostering and projecting black puppets and political formations to counter-balance the ANC - in particular Gatsha Buthelezi and Inkatha.
- anti-communism - with the intention of splitting the ANC, of distancing the ANC from its alliance with the SACP and of transforming the ANC into a reformist body.

In maintaining its onslaught against the ANC-led alliance the regime has several options in mind. They are, in descending order of preference from its point of view:

- rendering the ANC more or less irrelevant, and allowing an NP-led bloc of forces to win elections;
- alternately, forcing the ANC into some kind of power-sharing government of national unity with the NP and Inkatha;
- or, failing the above, at least ensuring that a future ANC dominated government is relatively

SACP MANIFESTO

weak and severely hamstrung.

But there is no reason why the regime should succeed in any of these objectives. A militant, well organised, mass based ANC-led alliance, acting with clear strategic purpose can seize and maintain the strategic initiative in the present situation.

Negotiations

We have entered negotiations because they may offer the shortest and most peaceful route for the transfer of power to the people. Our participation in negotiations does not rule out the use of any forms of struggle, in principle or in the long term, if negotiations do not offer a path to the transfer of power to the people.

Negotiations are a terrain of struggle. Power in negotiations is derived from outside the negotiating forums, in particular through the creation of centres of real power on the ground. For the regime this means the maintenance of control by the repressive apparatus and the system of local authorities. For the liberation movement this means the strengthening of the power of mass organisations as alternative sources of power in townships, the rural areas and the factories.

Central to our understanding of negotiations is the concept of strategic initiative. This is the ability by one side in the negotiations to determine and control the pace and direction of the negotiating process.

The SACP's immediate demands are for an interim government of national unity to prepare the way for a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of one person one vote.

Our aim must be to ensure that the process of democratisation is made irreversible. This means that the immediate issue under negotiation - a new democratic constitution and non-racial elections - must open up, not close down, a process of ongoing political, economic and social empowerment of the working masses of our country.

A new democratic constitution and elections will not on their own mark the achievement of national democratic change, let alone socialism. But they can open the door to a more or less prolonged phase of national democratic transformation, in which political, social and economic power is increasingly transferred (through ongoing mobilisation, organisation and struggle) to the people of our country. Only such a process can put an end to the accumulated effects of centuries of colonial dispossession and racial oppression. ★

Section Three

The Economic and Social Crisis

The South African capitalist economy is grossly skewed and uneven in character. It combines features of a relatively advanced capitalist economy with many of the characteristics of dire third world underdevelopment. This uneven character of the economy has everything to do with the particular South African path of capitalist development pursued over the last 80 years.

It is a path which our Party has conceptualised as colonialism of a special type. This is a variant of bourgeois rule in which the essential features of colonial domination in the imperialist epoch have been maintained and even intensified but within the boundaries of a single country.

Colonial, semi-colonial and neo-colonial rule have all been forms of bourgeois domination exerted **across** frontiers. Colonialism of a special type is a variant of this general species of bourgeois domination. It is a variant in which an increasingly powerful **local** capitalist ruling class with its wider white support base on the one hand, and the nationally oppressed **black** majority on the other, have been located within a single country and within a single economic formation.

Colonialism of a special type has involved the use of political power by a multi-class alliance within the white minority to promote a particular variant of capitalist development and to foster the economic interests of this minority, at the expense of the majority. This has resulted in an economy that suffers from three major, interrelated problems:

1. Extreme poverty and inequality

In terms of income distribution South Africa has one of the highest levels of inequality in the world. The richest 5% of the population owns 88% of all personal wealth. Over 40% of the potentially economic active population is unemployed. More African people now live in squatter camps than the total white population of our country.

These extremes of inequality are also reflected in the uneven distribution of basic infrastructure. Transport, electricity and water are concentrated on the mining and industrial areas of the country. 60% of the African population of our country are without electricity and without household tap water. 80% of all industrial activity is located in the PWV and Durban-Pinetown

SACP MANIFESTO

regions, while the bantustans are grossly underdeveloped.

2. Stagnation and decline

The steady decline in the growth rate of the economy since the mid-1970s is the second major problem. This decline is directly linked to the special colonial capitalist development path.

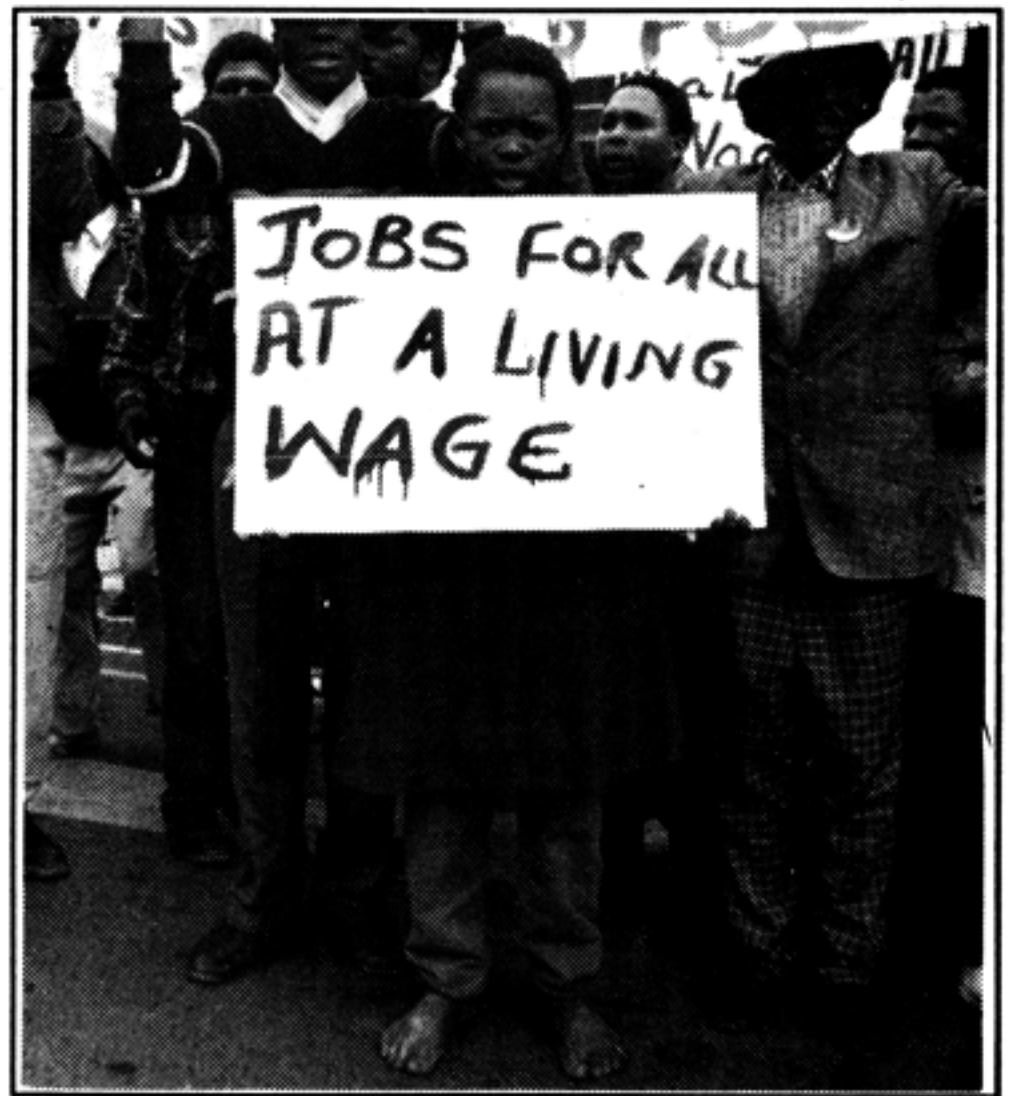
This path has involved an import substitution strategy focused on the production of luxury goods for a small white market; protectionist policies; and a reliance on cheap labour. This strategy has run into serious difficulties because of: the fact that the production of luxury goods has required the importation of hi-tech machinery at escalating cost; falling foreign earnings; the small domestic market; and a drastic shortage of skilled workers to meet the demands of an industrialising economy.

All of this has resulted in double digit inflation; low productivity of both labour and capital; rising unemployment; and falling levels of industrial growth and productive investment. In the course of the 1980s the South African population grew faster than the economy. Average income per person fell about 1,7% per year.

3. The stranglehold of monopolies

The third feature is also a direct consequence of the particular path of capitalist development pursued in South Africa. Monopoly concentration of capital is a universal trend within capitalism. But in South Africa, in the context of massive racial disparities in wealth and power, the level of concentration is virtually unprecedented. By the mid-1980s 2,7% of enterprises controlled over 50% of our country's total turnover. The trend to ever greater concentration is increasing each year.

The capitalist system in South Africa has failed our people dismally. Nothing could bear this out more vividly than the huge social problems that afflict our society:



Capitalism has been responsible for the decline in the economy which, among other things, has resulted in rising unemployment

SACP MANIFESTO

• Land

There is enormous land hunger in our country, both for farming and residential purposes. Racial restrictions on the ownership and use of land have finally been removed, at least technically. But the fact that black people can only acquire land on a "willing buyer-willing seller" basis at commercial rates means that most land will remain white-owned. For the majority of black people, including the 600,000 victims of forced removals, the abstract legal right to own land will not in any way redress the racial or class inequalities in access to land. These inequalities are the result of over 300 years of colonial conquest and dispossession.

• Housing

There are some 2 million squatters living in 864 squatter camps outside the bantustans. It is estimated that 1 in 6 South Africans live in informal housing. Only 7 out of 271 black townships outside of the bantustans are fully supplied with electricity. Conditions in the bantustans are even worse.

The provision of housing is still being left to private capital. This means that only those who have the means to enable the private sector to make a profit will have access to housing. For the very poor and the unemployed housing will remain inaccessible.

• Labour relations

The regime and the bosses have been forced into ongoing reforms by the strength of organised workers. At present there are tripartite talks under way between the regime, business and the unions, considering a range of issues including future economic policies. The capitalists and the regime are arguing against "unjustifiable wage increases", and they are calling for restraint and a "social accord" as the basis for a better quality of life.

But the income differences between management and workers is immense in our country, with no suggestion that these are set to change. The ratio of management to worker income in the South African clothing and textile industry, for instance, is 16-1. The comparable ratio in Japan is 4-1.

Retrenchments continue and the unemployment figure is above 7 million. There are still major sectors of the economy where workers do not have basic trade union rights - these include farm, forestry, domestic and public sector workers.

• Public services, health and welfare

Basic public services to the black majority are either grossly inadequate, or simply non-

SACP MANIFESTO

existent. In how many rural settlements do we find libraries, clinics or social workers? In the recent past the regime has attempted to privatise key public services including hospitals and the public transport system. This process is now at an advanced stage. Privatisation is making the situation worse. On top of this, the VAT taxation system has introduced taxes on basic goods, including bread, meat, milk and medicine. In the immediate future, South Africans are looking at less affordable, less efficient public services.

• **Education**

There are 3 million African children out of school and poverty forces nearly 660,000 to quit school each year. A quarter of those dropping out are in grade 1. Nearly a quarter of all African adults have no formal education at all. A quarter of all African pupils who start grade 1 reach matric, compared to 78% of white children who complete high school.

Some 60% of the African population of our country are not able to read or write. This makes South Africa's literacy rate **lower** than some of its poorest neighbours - like Lesotho and Zambia.

These statistics reflect decades of racially unequal educational spending, miserable educational facilities and massive overcrowding and understaffing. While there is a partial process of deracialisation of schools occurring, this process is only skimming the surface of the desperate crisis in education in our country.

• **The oppression of women**

It is women who have to bear the brunt of the acute social crisis in our country. It is women who constitute the majority of the some 13 million people crammed into the bantustans, living in the most abject poverty. It is women who constitute the majority of the unemployed, and of those who are forced to leave school early. In employment, it is black women who are in the majority of some of the most poorly paid and heavily oppressed sectors - domestic service, the service industry, and farm labour.

• **Political violence**

The social fabric of our communities has been further damaged by the massive violence unleashed by the apartheid regime and its proxies against our people.

Warlords have used their control over scarce community resources to terrorise and demand political allegiance. In some parts of the country, every social service - including education, pensions, water supplies - has become a site of intense violence.

SACP MANIFESTO

• *Criminal violence*

Massive social inequalities, squalid living conditions, high unemployment and totally inadequate education facilities for the majority have resulted in huge increases in both petty and violent crime. Cape Town has the highest murder rate of all cities in the world. It is closely followed by Johannesburg.

Both in political and in economic terms the special colonial variant of bourgeois rule in our country is now in irreversible crisis. The crippling damage it has done to our society, now no longer even benefits the ruling class. The capitalist class and its allies hope to reform the character of bourgeois rule in our country, the better to safeguard as much of existing privileges as possible, and, above all, to safeguard the capitalist system.

The formal, constitutional basis of colonialism of a special type is likely to be dismantled. But the **effects** of this variant of bourgeois rule, the dismal economic and social legacy it is bequeathing to a post-apartheid South Africa will not evaporate because there is a new constitution, or one-person one-vote elections.

The capitalist class in South Africa is unable to solve the social and economic problems of our country. It is incapable of leading the struggle to overcome the centuries-old legacy of racial oppression. Given the scale of the social problems, the massive underdevelopment of large parts of our country, the seven million unemployed, and the wider and deep-seated structural crisis of the economy - social democratic pacts between organised labour and capital are destined to fall far short of providing basic remedies.

Such pacts, which redistribute within limits, but leave the capitalist class in the economic and political driving seat might alleviate some problems. Indeed, given the present balance of forces within our country and internationally, such pacts might even be what is most immediately on the agenda. But any strategic perspective which sees such an arrangement as an end in itself will simply stabilise capitalist rule in our country, and leave the process of democratisation incomplete and thoroughly blocked. The aspirations of millions of our people will be betrayed.

It is the working class that needs to propel the broader national democratic revolution, right from the start. And it is the working class that needs, sooner rather than later, to lead our country democratically into socialism. ★

Section Four

The Way Forward

Our party's objective of building a socialist South Africa reflecting the aspirations of the working class calls for both an immediate and a longer term perspective.

a) The immediate perspective: National democratic revolution

The immediate objective of the SACP is the transfer of power to the people so that they can begin the process of building a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa. The main content of this national democratic revolution is the liberation of the African people in particular, and the black people in general.

These immediate objectives we share with our allies in the tripartite alliance (the ANC and COSATU), and with an even broader range of democratic forces. The broad outlines of these objectives are enshrined in the Freedom Charter.

For the SACP the national democratic revolution is not a delaying tactic or a side-track from our longer term socialist objectives. In the first place, real national democratic change will represent a major victory for the people of our country, and above all for the working class.

Secondly, in the concrete conditions of our country, national democratic transformation holds out the prospect for the most rapid and direct advance to socialism. A thorough-going process of national democratic change, and the broad range of popular forces that are and must continue to be mobilised behind this objective, constitute a major weapon in the struggle to loosen the stranglehold that the capitalist class exerts over our country's entire destiny.

But from the point of view of the working class it is not enough just to commit ourselves to the general objectives of national democratic change. The depth and quality of these changes are critical.

In the first place, it is crucial that national democratic transformation is not limited within a narrow legalistic and constitutional framework. The scrapping of all racist laws, a new democratic constitution, and the holding of one-person one-vote elections will represent an important victory for the people of our country - not least the working class.

SACP MANIFESTO

But these important democratic measures will only mark the very first steps in the long and difficult path of national democratic transformation. The objective of such a transformation must be the overcoming of the accumulated effects of three centuries of colonial conquest and dispossession, and over one century of capitalism.

Ownership, occupation and use of land requires radical readjustment. Large tracts of land owned by big landlords or the state, some of it used by the SADF, are not being used productively, while millions are land-starved. Affirmative action is urgently needed by the state to redress landlessness.

The Party demands the redistribution of all unused land so that the people in both rural and urban areas will be able to build homes, grow food and contribute meaningfully to the economic development of the country.

Anti-monopoly legislation must be strengthened and implemented vigorously so as to prevent a strangulation of the economy through price fixing, production controls, cartels and deliberate economic contraction with consequent job losses.

In the struggle for national democratic revolution the SACP commits itself to the fullest possible emancipation of women. The Party recognises that women's emancipation is not confined to legal rights, but must also involve redressing cultural, ideological, political and economic disabilities.

The only class force capable of leading our country in the fulfilment of these tasks is the working class. The SACP and the progressive trade unions, in particular, have a major responsibility to ensure that workers are active, effective and powerfully present on all fronts of struggle. We must guard against other class forces hijacking and curtailing the process of national democratic revolution.

The SACP's economic perspectives in the national democratic phase

Given the present balance of forces nationally and internationally, in the immediate aftermath of transition to national democracy there will be a mixed economy in which the capitalist sector continues to occupy a significant place. But a mixed economy in which the private sector has a more or less unrestricted power to determine the way in which wealth is appropriated and distributed is a recipe for the continuation of racism and the worst features of capitalism.

The post-apartheid society must not just be a political democracy. It must also see a widening of economic democracy in which there is growing popular control over economic planning,

SACP MANIFESTO

production and distribution.

The emerging situation in South Africa is one in which the working people can make a number of important gains. These gains could improve their own immediate situation, and they could be of great significance in laying the basis for a future socialist South Africa. These gains are, however, not inevitable. They will only be achieved through successful struggle now and in the period of national democratic revolution.

The organised formations of the working class, including the SACP and trade unions, need to identify the kinds of changes favourable both to workers' immediate interests and a longer term socialist project. In particular there are two main areas of economic policy in the national democratic phase which will require effective participation by organisations representing workers in decision-making:

Strategies for addressing pressing problems of poverty and inequality

A very broad range of forces now acknowledge the need for at least some redistribution of income and wealth, and for the basic needs of impoverished people to have some priority in a new democratic government's economic policy. The housing, education and employment crises are broadly recognised as requiring urgent attention. The SACP must work to ensure that these issues are addressed to the fullest possible extent. Our Party will campaign for the fullest possible popular involvement in the planning and execution of such programmes at both local and national levels.

• **A growth strategy:** It is clearly in the interests of the working class that the South African economy is placed on a new growth path. Socialism will be built most effectively in South Africa on the foundations of a successful national democratic reconstruction.

There is an urgent need to overcome the present economic stagnation and place the economy on a new growth path. Redistribution without growth will not be sufficient to raise incomes to a level that will guarantee a decent life to all our people. Without growth it will be impossible to reverse the present trend to rising unemployment. The SACP will, therefore, actively involve itself in shaping the growth strategy to ensure that the interests of the working people and the poor of our country are prioritised.

Redirecting production towards meeting the basic needs of the majority of our people will be an essential pillar of a new growth strategy. This will require that the most deprived and disadvantaged in our country are empowered to translate their most pressing needs into effective demand, and that there is investment in productive enterprises to respond to this

SACP MANIFESTO

demand. Particularly in situations where private capital shows itself unable or unwilling to respond to this challenge, state and other forms of public enterprise will have to be encouraged to take the lead.

The SACP believes that, in the immediate national democratic phase, we will need an effective state sector. Various forms of community and popular ventures should also be encouraged. The SACP, and all other formations standing for a socialist future, will need to become actively involved in encouraging the formation of public and collective enterprises of various sorts. The SACP will also campaign for the development of new methods of working and of democratic accountability within them. We need to build a core of public and collective enterprises that demonstrate in practice their capacity to meet the peoples' needs more effectively than private capitalist alternatives.

A growth strategy to answer the needs of our people will also have to ensure that our industries become more effective in export trade. South Africa needs to become a more significant exporter of manufactured goods, especially as our minerals are a wasting asset. A successful export strategy will only be possible if productivity is significantly raised and our industries are able to become more competitive internationally.

But the SACP absolutely rejects the notion that the burden of such restructuring to achieve higher productivity and greater international competitiveness should fall exclusively or even primarily on workers, while private capital becomes the main beneficiary. The bosses have failed dismally in the past. They cannot be trusted to lead the restructuring. Workers will need to take more of the initiative in planning and implementing a new growth strategy. They need to do this, not only to defend their own immediate interests, but also to guarantee that the process takes place in the broader national interest. The active involvement by workers in macro-economic bargaining must become part of a process in which the working class, more and more, takes the lead in shaping national economic policy and in defining the national interest.

The SACP and other organised formations of the working class must also take the lead in influencing the pattern of international economic alliances which a democratic, non-racial South Africa begins to develop. The organised formations of the working class must begin to forge closer ties with their counterparts in the southern African region. We must ensure that plans for closer regional cooperation and economic integration take due account of workers' interests throughout our region, and are built on principles of equity, mutual benefit and interdependence. We will not allow the new South Africa to become a sub-imperialist power within our region.

SACP MANIFESTO

The SACP will also struggle to ensure that a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist South Africa becomes active in revitalising a movement of the South in the battle to change the rules of the game of the world economy, which disadvantage the peoples of peripheral and semi-peripheral countries. In this our Party is inspired by the principle of working class internationalism, and by the common interest of all the peoples of the underdeveloped world.

Organisational and political tasks in the national democratic phase

The character and quality of national democratic change in our country will also be crucially affected by the role of our various multi-class mass organisations. Prime among these is the ANC. The SACP recognises the ANC as the formation best able to lead the entire national democratic revolution. Communists, as in the past, will remain in the forefront of helping to build a strong, mass-based ANC with its roots in the working class.

The task of national democratic transformation will be a difficult and relatively long process. In order to lead this process, our national liberation movement needs to remain broad, welcoming into its ranks all those who accept its objectives. While preparing itself seriously for elections, and for power, the broad national liberation movement needs to guard against any tendency to become a narrow electoral machine, or little more than a future state bureaucracy. The strength and character of our national liberation movement must continue to reside in its mass base.

The SACP, with its allies, will also seek to build a broad patriotic front. Such a front is required both in the immediate phase of transition, as well as in the longer process of national democratic transformation.

The deepening and the defence of national democratic transformation will require that the working masses of our country remain highly mobilised and organised. In addition to a strong and militant ANC, SACP and COSATU, our working people must be empowered through numerous independent mass democratic formations - civics, village committees, co-operatives, women's, youth, and cultural organisations, consumer bodies and a people's militia. A whole range of independent formations rooted among the working people will help to speed and to defend the process of transformation, and to check, balance and strengthen a future state of national democracy.

Throughout the process of negotiations for a new constitution, in eventual one-person one-vote elections, and in the longer process of national democratic transformation the SACP will work to maintain and broaden the unity of all democratic forces. At the same time the SACP will act, at all times, to defend the immediate and longer term interests of the working class.

SACP MANIFESTO

The SACP seeks to popularise and defend the cause of socialism. It will at all times seek to link immediate struggles to the need for a longer term transition to socialism.

In South African conditions the process of national democratic transition is the most direct line of advance to socialism. There may be forces today who support national democratic change but who do not support socialism. But, in fact, there is no contradiction between the basic aims and objectives of national liberation and socialism. Indeed, in order to attain the basic goals of national democracy, a transition to socialism will become essential. The SACP will work to convince democratically the great majority of South Africans that this is the case. We are very confident of success in this regard.

The full political empowerment of the people, the unification of our country in the face of massive underdevelopment, the progressive overcoming of the large-scale social, cultural and economic deprivation - none of these basic national democratic goals can be fully realised without socialism. As long as the commanding heights of the economy of our country are monopolised by a small group of powerful capitalists the deepening and defence of democratic gains will be limited and under constant threat.

b) The future is socialism

The possibility of a transition to socialism will be greatly enhanced if we achieve four crucial objectives within the national democratic phase of struggle itself:

- The building and strengthening of an independent vanguard Party of the working class
- The development of a vast network of democratic organs of popular participation in both the economy and the political system under the leadership of the working class;
- The restructuring of the state so as to establish state apparatuses shaped to relate directly and continuously with these popular structures; and
- A decisive increase of the sectors of the economy under social control and subject to democratic planning. In other words, a decisive weakening of the capitalist economy which is driven by exploitation and by the pursuit of profit rather than the needs of the people.

It is the development of these institutions of popular democracy to a position of dominance in all spheres - political, economic, social and cultural - which constitutes the core of the socialist system for which we are struggling.

Within such a system political and civil liberties (like multi-party democracy, a justiciable bill of rights, an independent judiciary and the basic freedoms of speech, association, worship and press) will be guaranteed. What is more, they will no longer be warped and distorted by the deep inequalities of wealth and power so characteristic of capitalism.

SACP MANIFESTO

Within such a socialist dispensation, the people's participation will not be restricted to the right to periodic votes for political representatives in a multi-party democracy. Through a series of sectoral and communal organisations, the people of our country should increasingly have a direct say in all aspects of their lives - their work, their education, their recreation, their neighbourhood, their environment.

Under socialism, the rudimentary organs of popular power (street and township committees, village committees, trade union locals, etc.) that emerged in struggle in the mid-1980s, should be greatly extended and they should increasingly have an institutionalised right and opportunity to participate in the running of our country.

Within such a system the economy will fall increasingly under social control. But we do not see control of the means of production as a mere question of legal ownership. There is no socialism where all the means of production are owned by a state run by a small circle of bureaucrats, without the democratic participation by the actual producers and consumers at all levels of the economy.

This democratic participation is compatible with various forms of ownership of the means of production. These include state, municipal, collective, co-operative and small-scale, non-exploitative family owned enterprises. In other words, state ownership (or nationalisation) is neither sufficient, nor is it necessarily always the only or most effective form of socialist ownership.

Our enemies like to spread the lie that the SACP wants to take away people's cars, houses or furniture. Socialism will give every individual the right to own and to dispose all non-exploitative private property.

The model of socialism that we develop in a future South Africa will be our own South African model, evolved from our own conditions. In building on our traditions and within our own conditions, we will, of course, learn from the negative and positive lessons from around the world.

Nothing will dissuade us from our firm conviction that a system based on the needs of the working people will prove to be far superior to the present system based on selfish greed and private profit. Nothing will deter us in our steadfast struggle to abolish, once for all, the bosses's stranglehold over our country's destiny. We reaffirm our commitment to ending a system where a handful of capitalists live off the sweat and blood of the great working majority. End wage slavery! Forward to socialism! ★

Section Five

The role and character of the SACP

The SACP's basic role is to be the leading political force of the South African working class. The SACP aims to organise, educate and lead the working class both in the immediate struggle for national liberation, and in the longer term struggle for socialism. The ultimate aim of the Party is the building of a communist society, that is, a society of abundance, a society finally free of all class oppression and exploitation.

To fulfil this function in the present situation, the SACP needs to be a relatively large, vanguard party with a disciplined and activist membership.

In the process of rebuilding after 40 years of illegality, the SACP needs to be strategically organised, in the first place, among the industrial working class of our country. It is this component of the wider working class that is, generally speaking, the best organised, which has the most revolutionary traditions, and which is most strategically placed to spearhead the struggle for democracy and socialist transformation.

At the same time the Party must not neglect to build among the wider sections of our working class, among the rural masses, among our militant youth and students, and among all socialist inclined forces.

In working to organise and empower the working class of our country, the Party pays particular attention to the task of working class cadre development. In branch education, in regional and national workshops, in open forums, through our Party publications, and through the development of night schools, the Party seeks to deepen working class consciousness, build all-round political skills, and foster an understanding of scientific socialism. In this way, the Party not only builds its own working class cadreship, but helps to build working class leadership in all the mass formations of our struggle.

Working class internationalism is another hallmark of the SACP. The SACP seeks to link the struggles within our own country to working class struggles in our region, in our continent and

SACP MANIFESTO

internationally. The SACP seeks to strengthen working class and international co-operation and unity between all communist, socialist and broad left forces. The world-wide revitalisation of the struggle for socialism requires open dialogue and comradely criticism between the widest range of forces broadly committed to the socialist vision.

The SACP has always played an important theoretical role in its own right, and in the context of the wider national democratic struggle. The Party and all its members should collectively seek to continuously develop and deepen the ideas of Marxism-Leninism and in particular to develop its application to our own society. Increasingly the Party's theoretical work must be elaborated not just as an analysis of society, but also as a guide to practice, and specifically, as a guide to concrete policy development in the transformation within our country.

The SACP seeks to act as the leading socialist formation within our country. It does this not by dominating or excluding other left forces, nor by self-proclamation, but by force of example, hard-work and by the general correctness of its theory and practice. The Party does not claim to be infallible, but it seeks to correct immediately and effectively any errors. The SACP encourages open discussion within its own ranks, and between it and all other left and socialist-oriented forces in our country.

Being a Marxist-Leninist Party, the SACP's basic role is to be the leading political force of the working class. The Party must at all times be in the forefront of combating in theory and practice backward moral, social, cultural and political practices and views. The Party and its members must take the lead in combating racism, tribalism, regionalism, chauvinism, sexism and all forms of narrow nationalism.

As the party of the South African working class the SACP does not lock itself up narrowly within the working class and its immediate concerns. The Party also seeks to project working class and socialist perspectives into the wider public domain. The SACP and its members must as a matter of duty participate as effectively as possible in all major public debates and forums.

But, at the end of the day, all the Party's many functions, stand or fall on its ability to be present, on a day-to-day basis, as an organised, visible, effective and fighting force on the ground, in the townships and villages, in the factories, mines and farms of our country.

BUILD THE WORKERS' VANGUARD!
BUILD THE SACP!
VIVA PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM!
FORWARD TO SOCIALISM!