
REGIONS AND DISTRICTS COMMITTEES AND UNITS MUST ENSURE THAT THIS BULLETIN IS NOT REPRODUCED NOR CIRCULATED TO ANY PERSON WHO IS NOT A PARTY MEMBER. EVERY COPY MUST BE ACCOUNTED FOR AND RETURNED TO RESPECTIVE REGIONS AFTER STUDY AND COMMENTS. REGIONAL AND DISTRICT COMMITTEES AND UNATTACHED UNITS SHOULD ENSURE THE RECALL AND DESTRUCTION OF ALL COPIES WITHIN EIGHT WEEKS OF THEIR REACHING UNITS.

INTRODUCTION

Since the announcement of the unbanning of the South African Communist Party on February 2nd, the question of the Party's re-emergence as a legal organisation has been occupying the attention of our Party at all levels. This is not a simple question given that the Party has been outlawed for 40 out of the 69 years of its existence; that laws such as the Suppression of Communism Act and the Internal Security Act are still in operation; and that many of our leaders have not been able to freely enter the country. It also arises at a time when communists throughout the world, in confronting distortions in the construction of socialism, need to subject themselves and their Parties to rigorous critical appraisal and change.

Given that our Party's occupation of the legal space must be seen in the context of on-going mass democratic organisation and activity, the Party leadership set in motion a process of consultation: with the Party underground structures; in Party branches and with our constituency; through bilateral talks with our allies; in a series of discussions between our Secretary General and leading members of different organisations. As part of this process, the Political Bureau of the SACP produced a report which was considered by a special consultative conference of the SACP held recently inside South Africa. This underground conference produced a series of recommendations. These recommendations were discussed, amended and endorsed by our Central Committee.

We reproduce below:

- (1) The Political Bureau Report
- (2) Report of the consultative mini conference
- (3) The major decisions of the Central Committee.

(1) REPORT OF THE POLITICAL BUREAU ON BEHALF OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE TO THE INTERNAL CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE

1) The ANC undoubtedly WILL remain the overall head of what will, for some time to come, be correctly described as a liberation alliance. For some time after a people's victory and certainly in the immediate aftermath of people's power, our perspectives will obviously be dominated by the need to consolidate the liberation process. But, as time goes on, the Alliance may well be widened. In the process, the role of the organised working class constituency within the Alliance will remain, if anything, more imperative.

2) The ANC itself will inevitably grow in leaps and bounds, attracting previous vacillating, unreliable and even collaborating elements from the middle sections. This may be unavoidable because it would be incorrect in any way to change the inter-class character of the ANC and its character as a mass movement. A considerable portion of these elements will be career - orientated elements or will, by virtue of their class background, try to steer the ANC itself away from its working class bias and towards solutions which favour the interests of the bourgeoisie.

In brief, the inevitable sharpening of the inter-class ideological contest, both in the run up to victory and in its immediate aftermath, requires as a matter of life or death the consolidation and growth of organised working class political and industrial power. From their longer term point of view the need to create conditions for an involvement towards socialism, will be frustrated without working class organised power.

There are many signs on the ground that if we fail to meet all these needs the vacuum will be filled by others. Many groups are waiting in the wings. Their growth - if our independent force and strength is not asserted - have the most serious consequences not only for us but for the future of the ANC as a revolutionary nationalist organisation. All these realities present us with a number of short-term and long-term complexities at both political and organisational levels.

In the political sphere we need to note the following:

a) we must not take the alliance for granted. It is not enough for us to rely on the past. We need to spread a more profound understanding about the future role of the party both in the developing situation and in the post apartheid phase. Media questions have been addressed to party representatives on issues such as what are our expectations in relation to future elections. Will the Party have an internal arrangement with the ANC or will it field its own candidates either in opposition to other

political groups or by virtue of some electoral pact with the ANC? We consider these questions speculative and premature but they nevertheless do point to a recognition that the Alliance will operate in a completely new context.

b) The crucial issue of the relationship between national liberation and social emancipation will require greater emphasis than ever before. In the post apartheid phase the choice of the path will no longer remain predominantly a theoretical disputation. The questions of development options will call for a practical decision. Although we have already publically committed ourselves to a mixed economy in the immediate post apartheid phase this perspective does not in itself dispose of the question of whether it will be a mixed economy with a capitalist orientation or one with a socialist orientation.

c) We have always insisted on our dual role - as an independent political organisation and as part of the Alliance. What new balance must be involved in these two imperatives? Is there a need to re-examine the shape of the Alliance in the new conditions? For example, comrades, these questions suggest themselves in relation to the existing prospects of negotiations. We should undoubtedly work to ensure that the ANC becomes the umbrella at the eventual negotiating table. This implies that various patriotic interest groups become an identifiable part of the ANC-led negotiating team. This was recently raised by COSATU comrades at the May 10, Johannesburg Joint Meeting. Do we as a Party insist on some form of independent participation under the umbrella of the ANC? If so, to what extent? In other words can the Party continue to subsume its role and leave it to be implied rather than to be seen as an independent participant? Whatever the future might hold, at the moment the umbrella concept remains imperative. The time is certainly not ripe for us to have joint delegations at the negotiating table. At the same time - as happened in the Groote Skuur talks - the Party should have a visible presence as part of the ANC delegation. Whilst on this question of negotiations, comrades, we must remain clear about the need not to allow the negotiating process to suffocate the struggle on the ground.

d) As already mentioned if we look slightly further ahead the question will arise of how we fit into any kind of election process. At this point the search for a definite answer is premature. But we must begin to toss it about in our minds.

e) The Alliance has now been re-cast with the phasing out of SACTU and the inclusion of COSATU. This is more than just a substitution. We can claim that, for the first time since SACTU ceased to be a trade union federation in the real sense of the word we now have an Alliance partner which truly represents the bulk of the organised trade union movement. Without in any way detracting from the tripartite content of the Alliance, there is a need to examine the extent to which the Party and COSATU need a special relationship. It would of course be wrong to institutionalise a separate joint structure. But activities such as the Harare Workshop continue to be in place as long as they are structured in such a way which does not detract from the tripartite Alliance.

f) The rapidly changing situation, both at home and internationally, require us to have another look at our recently adopted Party Programme - "The Path to Power". Certain formulations no longer lie happily alongside such recent developments.

What Kind of Party?

It is crystal clear that we have to build a Party of a new type. In addressing this question we must focus not only on the obvious fact that the style of work which was imposed upon us by underground conditions no longer has validity (in many respects), but also on the lessons of the disasters which afflicted so many Communist Parties in the recent period. It is true that our Party can claim some credit for having distanced itself many, many decades ago from some of the worst distortions which manifested themselves in a large slice of the International Communist and Workers Movement. At the same time, we must be conscious of the fact that there have been isolated indications that some of our members and structures still carry some baggage from the past. As we enter the new period we must be on our toes to eradicate all remaining vestiges of Stalinsim in our style of work. In short, we must find ways of coping with the heritage created in the old conditions and infected by old thinking.

We must:

a) be more vigilant than ever against all remains of sectarianism, arrogance or elitism.

b) not mechanically reject those socialists who, in the past, expressed genuine reservations about some of our policies or practices. We need to concede that some of these criticism were not completely unfounded.

c) in the new period, make a clean break with those limitations on inner-democracy and accountability which underground life and the drawbacks of exile imposed upon us.

d) above all, ensure that our role as vanguard of the working class must be one of democratic mobilisation and should not be imposed. Our party has no inherent right to claim the leadership of our class. That leadership must be won by gaining acceptance for our open policies and should not be based on a claim of right.

e) while working to win a primary place as political leader of the working class, accept political pluralism both now, for the post-apartheid phase and in the period of socialist construction.

As already noted the potential for our growth is enormous. Literally thousands of workers and youth are ready to come into our ranks. This positive reality imposes upon us the urgent need to find a new balance between the concept of a mass party and the existing rather elitist and narrow parameters which we have up to now set ourselves when approaching the question of recruitment.

The newly emerged and most impressive crop of working class leaders in both upper and middle levels are ready or h)half- ready to join our ranks. We should not make it as difficult as previously for them to join. Without sacrificing quality and without being reckless, this is the time to be less discriminating than we have been forced to be up to now.

Is it correct to use the words "mass party" when addressing problems of our growth? We believe that as long as attention is paid to calibre and quality we should not fear to use the term. There are on the ground many, many thousands among the workers and youth whom we must find and who must be publically encouraged to find us. If the broad approach is accepted it will of course be necessary to spell out more detailed guidelines for recruitment which will reflect the true balance between quantity and quality. It will also be necessary to examine whether the method of probation should be maintained. It is a method which, even in the past, has not really worked effectively.

When we talk of democracy and accountability we should relate these concepts not only to inner-Party life but to the way we relate to our broad constituency. We must more and more seek ways of making the masses feel that they too have a say in the formulation of our policies. It is not suggested that major policy decisions must always give the weight to popular endorsement. But, there are many instances where it would be both correct and necessary to

encourage an input from people on the ground and from their organisations before finalising a line of policy. This process of consultation was undertaken both in relation to the Workers' Charter campaign and to the discussion about the lessons of the failures of socialism. The approach has gained for us a considerable respect from fraternal organisations and activists on the ground.

The Public Face of the Party and its Independent Role:

Forty years of illegality has left its own stamp on the way the Party was forced to operate and the way its members projected themselves at all levels. Over 90% of our membership have not experienced legality and have not acknowledged themselves publically as communists. Most of their public and private political activity has been carried out through our fraternal organisations.

It is necessary to stress that one of the most important reasons for our Party's historic political impact was the fact that well-known communists were accepted by the people and by our fraternal organisations as men and women of the highest calibre who could be trusted to occupy some of the highest positions at broad leadership levels. Men and women like Kotane, Dadoo, Mabhida, Marks, Ray Alexander and numerous others played a seminal role in laying the foundations for the present popularity of our organisation. Even in the more recent period the work of the few communist leaders who had a public face played a significant part in gaining increased support for our Party.

At virtually every meeting of our Central Committee since 1970 the question of the visibility of our members has been addressed. Even in the old conditions there was a continuous stress for the need to expose a greater number of our leading cadres. But in practice, the Party rejected a leadership which utterly distorted its true character. This helped to fuel speculation about the Party's role as a 'kabal' in other organisations.

The style of work which was imposed on us by illegal conditions and by the surroundings in which we were forced to work in exile has encouraged a psychological pattern which militates against open identification with the Party. We are of the view that (leaving aside certain complexities of the transition period) our goal must be to work for the creation of a Party in which both the leadership and the membership proudly acknowledge their membership. The visibility of the leadership and our membership will correctly reflect our make-up and our social conditions. We must separate this question from the problem which has faced our whole movement of activists "wearing two caps". This problem has a bearing on the

division of functions in relation to available time. But, ultimately, those comrades who are involved full-time in the national movement, trade union movements, etc., should, in general, have no inhibition to acknowledge their affiliation. There may be exceptional cases but these must constitute a handful in relation to the total picture.

The Party must obviously continue to play an important role at all levels of the mass movement and devote a great deal of its energies to help build the ANC, trade union movement, etc. This applies to the Party as a collective in its institutionalised relationship to the mass movement and to individual members. But, as was the case prior to 1950, we must more and more be seen to be carrying out these tasks both as disciplined members of those organisations and as communists. It is also vital that a sufficient number of members both at leadership and grassroots levels should be selected to concentrate their main energies on the building of the Party.

There is a need to give more attention to our Party propaganda work such that this truly provides us with the agitational and organisational tools we need. Our aim should be to write, distribute and produce on the ground so that our propaganda becomes timely and responsive to the day-to-day developments. This aspect of our work should also link up to our finding practical answers for the systematic education of our cadreship.

In relation to the immediate future it is imperative for the Party to emerge with an impressive public leadership which reflects our social and class composition and which pays attention to the gender question. In all respects we must publically assert our legitimacy and our indigenous roots particularly against the background of a period where we have been projected by the enemy as a conspiratorial minority dominated clique.

All this must inform the content of the composition of an interim internal leadership group which we must announce at the public launch of our Party. We will also have to move with urgency towards creating District Committees and Branches initially in every major urban centre. This will require premises, full-time organisers and other structures. We must immediately begin to address the question of finding the resources to finance such an expansion.

It should be emphasised that our relationship with the Alliance requires a process of consultation regarding the immediate public identification of a necessary group of our cadres as open communists.

In the immediate period, before the full return of exiles, we propose that the powers of the Party's Interim Leadership Group (CPILG) should be given the powers to act autonomously in ongoing work and addressing day-to-day organisational and political problems. But the CPILG falls under the jurisdiction of the existing Central Committee and its Political Bureau. All major aspects of our policy and principal political interventions must be guided by the existing constitutional collectives.

It follows from many of the issues which we have addressed that we need to take a new look at our existing Constitution in order to prepare for its remoulding in the changed conditions. Although this may have to await the 8th Congress, consideration could now be given to interim variations which may be demanded in this new phase.

A recent Central Committee meeting of our Party decided that the 8th Congress will be convened at home in July 1991 on the 70th Anniversary of the founding of our Party. We have just over a year to prepare for that Congress. By the time it is convened our Party must have built a national organisation with a mass base and with organised roots, especially among our working people.

Comrades, we greet your Mini-Conference as the most vital launching pad for building of our great organisation as an unconquerable force for the future of democracy and socialism. We pay warm tribute to those comrades whose sacrifice and courage in difficult underground conditions, have played such a seminal role in creating the base for an effective advance into the future. Your Mini-Conference will go down in our history as one of the most important steps in our long and noble struggle. We are all conscious that we have arrived at one of the most vital crossroads in our history. With a will and a determination which flows from all that is best in communist tradition we are sure that we can make it.

Long live the SACP!

Long live the ANC!

Long live the revolutionary alliance of ANC, SACP & COSATU!

Forward to democracy and socialism!"

(2) REPORT OF THE INTERNAL CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE
OF THE
SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY

1. CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE
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1. CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE - INTRODUCTION

The holding of the internal consultative conference provided a unique opportunity for members from various parts of South Africa to come together and collectively address the issues. Comrades who have all been members of underground Party structures came from the major industrial areas of our country. It brought together the practical experience of members who are currently engaged in the organisation of trade unions, women, youth and civics and comrades involved in the re-establishment of the legal ANC. Assembled at the meeting, were comrades from every generation of struggle including some Central Committee members. The average age of the participants was just under 40 years.

Conference discussed key questions, with conscious effort to make concrete recommendations around numerous issues. A number of papers were presented. What made conference particularly noteworthy was the active involvement of the participants in all items on the agenda and the positive and comradely spirit that prevailed throughout.

From the outset, the tone of the meeting was set with the reading of the message from our General Secretary, Comrade Joe Slovo, on behalf of the Central Committee. It not only posed fundamental questions of theory, strategy and tactics, but it raised a host of practical and organisational aspects which need to be addressed. In a concise, open and critical way, it posed questions concerning the immediate period ahead within the context of the current situation nationally and internationally. It also raised issues regarding our immediate strategy while always holding in view our ultimate objective of bringing about a truly democratic and humane socialist society.

1.1 CHALLENGES WE FACE:

See the Political Bureau Report

1.2 WHAT TYPE OF PARTY?

In view of the fact that the Central Committee had decided that the 8th Congress will be convened at home in July 1991 on the 70th Anniversary of the founding of our Party, there was consensus about the need for the Party to officially launch itself in the near future to be able to create structures so that the next Congress is both representative and democratic. Conference made specific recommendations as to when and how the Party should be launched within the next few months.

While the occupation by the Party of the legal space which currently exists was the primary focus of the consultations, Conference gave special attention to type of Party that we want to create.

The paper which opened the discussion on the Party of a New Type paved the way for conference to subject ourselves and our organisation to close scrutiny. A combative, challenging start to discussions which also focused attention on the road ahead - the painstaking care with which we need to build a morality and culture amongst ourselves which will enable us to recapture the essence of communism: its humanity and its scientific approach.

Introductory Paper:

PARTY OF A NEW TYPE

"The foundations of a good communist lie on two basic perceptions: the first is rooted in the empathy instinctively felt with the oppressed, with human suffering in any form, and by the desire to alleviate and end such suffering. This above all gives shape to our humanity. The second lies in a scientific appreciation of the laws of motion of society and an understanding which applies the tools of analysis and the outlook of dialectical and historical materialism in our approach any problem.

Without the latter our vision of the future would be but a dream. Without the former our dreams would be devoid of a vision.

It is the intertwining of these two aspects that makes communists such dedicated unrelenting fighters in the cause of humankind, in which our goal is the flowering of the human personality and the realisation of humankind's humanity.

Today more than ever before we are better equipped to understand the relationship of these twin roots of our origins as communists. We cannot talk of a Party of a new type without asserting our vision; without asserting the centrality of the individual.

This is the only path along which the mistakes we have made in our striving to create a better society not for ourselves alone, not for the working class alone, but for every individual - can be turned into a meaningful reassertion of our vision.

The experience of the striving of oppressed and exploited people to change society is also shaped by the fact that we are not mere visionaries. Communists recognise that it is only if we come together voluntarily to constitute and organisation designed to shape us into a fighting organisation capable of waging war against those who exploit and oppress. Otherwise change in society becomes an accidental phenomenon. Democratic centralism is therefore an irreplaceable element in such a fighting organisation. The principles of democratic centralism give us the flexibility to fashion ourselves according to the needs of the battle against the oppressor and the exploiter. It is the oppressor and the exploiter who determine the rules of war and yet it is we keep to our principles.

We can never be happy with restricting the democratic rights of ourselves as members of the Communist Party. But the reality is that we have always been willing to diminish those rights to ourselves in order to be able to successfully wage our struggle.

We in South Africa have had to wage 40 years of our struggle in conditions of total clandestinity. Even in this period we have demonstrated a capacity to try to extend inner-Party democracy. But we could never overcome the constraints of illegality. Today when the fruits of struggle has forced our legalisation on the regime, we need to think deeply about inner-Party democracy.

Our Party is not simply a Party of like-minded individuals. It is not a club. As members of the Party each of us as individuals and as part of the collective commit ourselves to being activists in the struggle. As communists we work for the realisation of a vision where people as a people take their destiny into their own hands.

So our democracy and our accountability reside in two planes: we are accountable to each other and within the Party for maintaining our commitment and our activism. But we are also accountable to our people and not just our membership. How are we to achieve this?

One thing we know we cannot talk about people's power unless we are prepared to place ourselves before the judgment of the people. If the people's judgement condemns an individual member he/she stands condemned before the Party. We cannot defend such a member save that we can try to help the member refashion his/her views and conduct.

We need to combat the attitude that proclaims our existence as a vanguard of the working class without considering anything that we as a Party need to do to earn such a place.

We need to undo the arrogance that has been allowed to develop amongst us - namely that our position as Party members entitles us to be above the inner-democracy of other organisations to which we belong (something the General Secretary has said is that we cannot afford to be a broederbond in other organisations); the autocratic approach which says that we will manipulate as a group from within rather than working to persuade, convince and raise the consciousness of those who disagree. We need to combat that approach.

We need despise the conceit which gives rise to those who rely on "laying down the line"; who do not listen and learn but dictate instead.

Such decrees, arrogance and conceit have never been a part of our Party's principles or of the practice it has accepted. And yet such conduct - if we are to truly examine ourselves with honesty - is to be found in our ranks and it must be rooted out.

The message of our Central Committee has clearly highlighted that our struggle has now entered a phase characterised by a sharpening of the contest of ideas and ideologies. We cannot hope to measure up to this challenge if the ideas we put forward as a Party are not put to the test of rigorous debate amongst ourselves. So that what emerges from that debate is the result now only of our collective wisdom but simultaneously equips us to engage in the contest with other ideas.

Above all we need to recognise that the way we conduct ourselves today determines the shape of society tomorrow and our role in that society. The vanguard role of the Party places on us a heavy responsibility. Just as it is not won by proclaiming ourselves vanguard, so too we have to continue to earn and re-earn that place. We cannot expect our worthy past to give us any special rights to the present and the future save that which we continually earn by our practice.

In determining the direction we take as a Party of a new type we need to ask ourselves what do we mean when we say we are a vanguard Party? Does vanguardism imply exclusivity? Or is it compatible with a mass party? And if we are to be a vanguard Party how do we render ourselves accountable both for what we do both within the Party and outside the Party? How do we render ourselves accountable within primary grassroots organisations, within the trade unions, within fraternal organisations? These are questions that cannot be answered by means of some edict from the Party leadership. They are questions we need to debate amongst ourselves. They are questions for which we need to develop answers. Above all we must be able to justify those answers to friend and foe alike. As communists we have never had a hidden agenda. Our detractors have always sought to taint us with this stigma. Now that we are on the eve of emerging as a legal Party we need to develop a position where we are able to take the offensive to remove that stigma once and for all.

At our 7th Congress last year we adopted the "Path to Power" as the Programme of our Party in the current phase of struggle for national democracy. In that Programme we adopted a clear position with regards to our understanding of our Party as a vanguard Party. That statement was based on the assumption of our illegality. While we fully support the outlook in the programme we need to re-examine it in the context of our unbanning and in the context of the immense potential to make our Party a mass Party. While the Programme correctly focuses on inner-Party democracy and the need for us as communists to subject ourselves totally to the internal democracy of whatever organisation we serve in outside of the Party, we would suggest here that in the new conditions we also need also to bring into focus our public accountability to our constituencies as well as the central fact that our vanguardism derives from our commitment when we join the Party to fashion ourselves as ACTIVISTS in every field of struggle. When we say we want to emerge as a Party of a new type we need to be absolutely clear amongst ourselves what we mean by this. When we say we want and we have to reassert the vision of socialism we need not only proclaim a platform but to demonstrate our adherence to that platform by our practice. In this regard we should never fear that as communists we are our own harshest critics; as communists, we have the tools to learn from our experience of struggle. We can therefore justly say we have the greatest potential to correct mistakes and to meet the challenge of our time. However this inherent potential is meaningless unless we transform it into a capacity."

There were a number of aspects of this paper which conference felt needed further debate - for example on the questions of internal democracy and accountability. Although in the subsequent discussion about Party structures, these issues were looked at in terms of Party rules, constitution, etc; it was nonetheless felt that the Party is obliged also to be accountable in a broader sense. How

we account to the working class and to our people is more difficult to answer in practical terms.

On the question of a mass party, there was broad consensus that the key thing to "mass" and "vanguard" is that the Party we seek to create will not be a Party of supporters and spectators but A PARTY OF ACTIVISTS not only in other organisations but in the building of the Party itself. With this perspective it was felt that there is no conflict between mass Party and vanguard Party. Lively exchange took place around the question of the criteria for membership. Conference recommended to the Central Committee that guidelines for recruitment should be drawn up as soon as possible. The fact that recruitment must be based on acceptance of the Party programme, its rules and its aims is essential. But an additional criterion was argued for, namely that members should also join on the basis of acceptance of the Party's strategy and tactics.

Intertwined with this appraisal of the necessary principles upon which our Party must base itself, were the suggestions and ideas aimed at giving these principles practical content. This aspect of the discussion was initiated by a paper covering the Party's launch, national and regional structures, composition and tasks. Questions relating to the shape of the Party's initial structures, its priorities; how we create a constituency, and so on, were put before conference.

The proposed interim internal leadership contained in the Central Committee message to the meeting was an idea that was strongly endorsed. Much discussion focussed on this. The characteristics are that it should be internal and interim; it should exist from the time of launching the Party until the different regional structures, district committees and local branches are formed and elect representatives to the 8th Congress. Though an interim and appointed group, established to help create conditions for future structures, it should be augmented by the CC members from abroad. It should also be able to provide guidance and speak on behalf of the Party, subject to the authority of the Central Committee and its Political Bureau.

It would be the first public appearance of a group of Party leaders for a great many years (aside from a few individuals who have held public Party positions). Therefore what is vital is that such a leadership commands the respect and confidence of our people and reflects the social base that we strive for: the bias towards the black working class, our non-racial composition and our commitment to affirmative action regarding the active participation of women at all levels. Conference felt that we must ensure this composition is not on the basis of tokenism. Emphasis must be on ability.

It was agreed that the question of finances and resources in organising the launch and in the ensuing building of Party structures needs special attention. This was not looked at in detail because of limitations of time. Although there were proposals concerning subscriptions - and conference fully endorsed the position that subs should be related to the income/occupation of members - neither this question nor the question of financial self-reliance was looked at in any detail. It was however agreed that to maximise the existing Party resources, the initial phase of building party structures should concentrate on main industrial centres. The need to prioritise in order to more speedily advance was accepted. It was felt that the specific identification of which would be the initial areas should receive further attention.

The question of industrial/residential-based branches was raised. But the overwhelming experience of comrades present at the conference was that with few exceptions, for example in the case of migrant hostels, the organisation of branches in the current conditions must be related to where people are living. Discussion on this important question however was not closed.

Although proposals around the question of what sub-committees should be established under the interim leadership were submitted to the Central Committee, with the exception of propaganda, time did not allow for full examination of the tasks of each of these committees.

Conference was presented with a detailed paper which examined main components of our propaganda and educational work, and concentrated on drawing the attention of comrades to all the practical aspects of establishing this side of our work.

Amongst others, the following key propaganda and educational functions were identified:

- a) to be used as an organising tool
- b) to educate and activate the masses
- c) to agitate
- d) to create conditions for the fullest development of the human personality
- e) to create a new political culture

Discussion focused on how we can ensure that Umsebenzi and the AC can fulfil these needs in the process of organising a legal party. In addition, it was felt that we need to establish a capacity for localised propaganda work. Conference discussed the ways in which our propaganda will generate some finances. Recommendations on this and the need to explore how this work could be run along commercial lines were made to the Central Committee. It

was strongly felt that our propaganda should generate some income to offset the costs involved in its production.

Umsebenzi has tremendous reputation; its editorial standard was highly praised and conference urged that the standard be maintained. However, production is a problem as it needs to be produced in massive quantities. We will have to transform Umsebenzi from a free publication to a paid publication. Comrades who had recently been involved in the distribution of Umsebenzi to workers indicated that workers will be willing to pay for it.

Conference was unanimous in concluding that the AC needs transformation. The Central Committee was urged to change it into a lively organ of socialist debate. Some comrades felt that any theoretical journal that is too closely associated with the Party could stifle debate. If intellectuals are interested in socialist debate - whether or not they are in the Party - they should feel welcome to contribute.

Some comrades expressed the view that the AC's name should be changed and also that it should be paid for from the beginning. A proposal to set up a separate, independent trust for the AC/this type of journal was sharply debated.

1.3 CONTEXT WITHIN WHICH WE EMERGE:

Conference deliberated over the crisis facing the socialist countries and sought to draw the necessary lessons: the need to avoid the alienation of the party from the masses; commands and orders from above; the degeneration of trade unions, women, youth and other organisations into rubber stamps of the party; and the suppression of dissent and debate. An introductory paper was followed by wide-ranging discussions. The issues were raised and re-raised at different stages of the proceedings.

The overriding consensus which was reached was that the current upheavals of socialism do not mean the end of socialism. The alienation between people and the party, the party and the working class and the party and the youth which developed in these countries is one aspect from which a host of lessons has to be learnt. For example about how mass organisations can become subservient to the State if they do not enjoy the independence that they should have. Thus at present communists all over are in taking stock and critically examining themselves. The bourgeoisie has not looked at their systems critically: - their whole system of inequality could never be solved under capitalist relations of production. Unlike the critical ways of the socialist world, how it is looking at itself and making necessary adjustments, capitalists are not able to this. The process of re-examination in socialist

countries has also set the imperialist world back, eg disarmament and international peace initiatives that have emanated from this process.

The discussion turned towards a rigorous assessment of ourselves. We as South African communists have an advantage: we are a part of the broad front in the South African struggle. Thus we have been able to learn from the people and to adjust our policy and practices. We are reminded of our history and the sacrifices of South African communists. Yet, the crisis in the socialist countries poses questions we must ask of ourselves. Communists in our country must listen to these warnings. In all those countries of crisis, communists were driven by the principles of communism - in the stage of struggle against fascism, members of these parties sacrificed unto death to bring about freedom. These were not periods of corruption. In all the socialist countries communists were involved in magnificent struggles. Communists everywhere are driven by the interests of the people. We therefore have to look at problems arising out of the fruits of office. It becomes a real question for us how to move forward into the period where State office looms on the horizon.

De Klerk's statement that there is no immediate threat from communism and that the party is no real threat to the system, has to be viewed in the context of the current emphasis on negotiations which has the danger of resulting in mass actions being suffocated. Maybe that is one of the reasons why the regime moved so quickly. We need to undertake major initiatives which capture the resources and energies of the people. Though we have been small in number our strength has always been dependent on our closeness to our people. So we must ensure we do not become remote. Negotiations should not be divorced from the masses. Our strength at the table depends on what we do on the ground. There is a tendency on the part of the movement not to put the questions before the people and there is a tendency on the part of the people to feel that the question of obstacles is a matter confined to the negotiating table.

We need to take our perspectives of the current situation to the ground otherwise our people will not perceive our tactics as theirs. Thus there needs to be a much more systematic way of consulting and reporting back. There was very strong feeling expressed about this by conference. Linked to this, conference expressed considerable concern about the way in which all components of the Alliance should emerge in the legal terrain with proper consultation and reporting back; and further that where this has not been the case urgent measures should be taken to correct it.

The lack of feedback now should not lead us to distort what the process have been thus far. It is the ANC, the Party, the trade unions and the mass democratic formations as well as Umkhonto we Sizwe which forced the regime to the present conjuncture: significantly, the Harare Declaration and especially the role of comrade Mandela who even from prison really forced the regime to look at the question of negotiations in a manner that does not compromise us. We had a mandate: the preconditions are the popular demands of the people. In the same way we need to seek a mandate for the next stage of the negotiations: to argue for an interim government to bring about a constituent assembly; to argue for ways through which the redistribution of the wealth must occur, etc. We must do this now.

We - the activists - have failed to take full advantage of the fact that some of the preconditions have been met and we have to take such advantage of the spaces which have been opened in the future. It is not the masses but rather the activist core that is being demobilised.

In the context of the role of the masses there was lively debate on the question of the bantustans and town councils. There was broad consensus that our approach to different situations should be flexible and should be guided by the need to involve the masses. In certain instances it was felt that the growth of mass activity in some of the bantustans had made the once correct approach of demanding a referendum, tactically incorrect at the current conjuncture; what was once a demand involving the people today because of the mobilisation of the people was a foregone conclusion. Mass activity would be better sustained were we to address the people to put pressure on these authorities to democratise the existing structures in preparation for their reincorporation into a future democratic South Africa. While this latter may be the best tactic in certain cases, in others, eg in the case of Bophuthatswana and Kwa Zulu, the demand for reincorporation now is equally valid.

Concern was expressed that layers and layers of activists have not been made to understand current tactical manoeuvres to neutralise and win over the bantustan leaders. It is taking place over the heads of the people and done in a way that confuses our people.

The current climate holds immense potential for a significant advance of our struggle. It requires creativity and tactical flexibility. Our vision is of a socialist society in which humanity and the individual with truly flourish. Yet to emerge into a world where what we do in our country, how we do it and the way in which we conduct ourselves in today's context where the vision of socialism is claimed to be invalid, makes the challenge

even greater. While we as communists have unlimited potential to learn from our mistakes, we must transform this potential into a reality.

1.4 REVOLUTIONARY ALLIANCE:

The following extracts are taken from the paper which introduced the discussion on the ANC-SACP-COSATU Alliance:

"This new situation has its own problems. In trying to understand these problems, we need to speculate on why the other side decided to unban both the ANC and the Party at the same time.

To say that our all-round struggle obliged the other side to act as it did on February the 2nd, provides only half the answer. We need to be alive to the fact that the regime, together with its imperialist allies, cherish the idea that conditions exist for them to trap the ANC and the Party into rivalry. This perspective on their part is sustained partly by events in Eastern Europe as well as by the ANC's potential for a phenomenal growth with an inter-class content.

Over the years, the ideologists of anti-communism have spread the myth that the Communists' policy of alliances is Machiavellian and is allegedly designed to use an ally and then to throw him out like a squashed lemon. Given this, the perspective ahead of us therefore, is one of an intense ideological attack against us as well as the Alliance. We have to hold ourselves in readiness to engage in this polemic. We must also bear in mind that the future and viability of this Alliance depends, above anything else, on how it is developed in the new situation.

Contrary to what anti-communist ideologists have been saying, to us an alliance implies equality and respect for the allies' independence and identity. We understand the general laws of the formation and the development of this Alliance to be:

- i) community of the allies' vital interests;
- ii) consideration of these interests in the economic and political platform of unity;
- iii) the masses' own experience as the basis for the Alliance;
- iv) unity and struggle in the framework of the Alliance;
- and
- v) democratic methods of relations between the allies.

Tripartite consultations at national level will be meaningless unless they are reproduced at local and regional levels.

Our independence will derive from the fact that we go into the Alliance as a separate organisations, each with its own constitutions, decision-making structures and programs. Our mandates to the Alliance platform will at all times be derived from our own decision-making structures. The Alliance platforms do not have as such, to usurp the role and function of our respective constitutional structures as allies. This means therefore that Alliance forums will have less decision-making powers - relative to the constitutional structures of the constituents.

The perspective of building and developing "Peoples' Power" provides the initial basis for the Alliance. We believe that the ANC is the spearhead of this process and that the trade union movement is a critical organ thereof.

This brings us to the role of the individual Party member vis-a- vis the ANC, individual trade unions and COSATU as well as all grassroots organisations. Proceeding from our perspective of "Peoples' Power", we see the need to have vibrant mass-based formations within and outside the Party. Party members have as much responsibility in building these formations as they have in building the Party. The same understanding that we had during the days of the Congress Alliance and in the formative stages of the trade union movement, are subject (in the same way as everybody else is expected to be), to the discipline of those organisations."

Conference agreed that the Alliance is a strategic alliance based not only on how to defeat the enemy but also to create organs of people's power. Our actions have to be such that they are geared to not only to strengthen the alliance and take the people forward in united mass action, but also to strengthen each component of the Alliance. It is a relationship of independence and inter-dependence. The pivot of the Alliance is democracy and accountability within each of the constituents and to one another. It should be formalised. But, in addition, we felt that there is also a need for decisiveness and the capacity to act - always on the basis of involving the masses. Otherwise we run the danger of building huge structures and bureaucracies and nothing will get done.

Two suggestions were made. Firstly, that besides the bilateral relationships that will emerge between constituents in the Alliance, and those with other organisations; the key to the effectiveness of the Alliance is the establishment of a joint strategising and planning body. The Tripartite Alliance should not become a restraint but a facilitator. There should also be place for

bilateral relationships.

Secondly, conference felt that if the Alliance has structures, it should also have certain work of its own as the Alliance. To this end recommendations for the organisation of joint campaigns of the Alliance was made to the Central Committee.

The question of how do the mass based structures like the UDF feed into this alliance was extensively debated. It was felt that bodies such as civics potentially have a far wider basis for membership than the working class constituency of COSATU or political constituencies of both the ANC and the Party. We want the entire people to play a part in the civics. We want access to this wider community. These are rudimentary organs of people's power which must be strengthened. The formalisation and structuring of the Alliance which is necessary to make it workable, is unlike the often informal or temporary structures built by communities.

It was suggested that while the alliance would have its national and regional structures, at the local level it should draw into its activities the broad majority of grassroots organisations. These local levels would embrace the widest spectrum of support especially of organisations who have supported us during the defiance campaign, the Conference for a Democratic Future and all our struggles.

Conference discussed the UDF in a somewhat different light especially as it has come to occupy an important space. It was felt that of its own accord the UDF is perceiving its role differently since the unbanning of the ANC. One aspect of this changing role is that the umbrella body of all local civic organisations which the UDF had planned to create, would now be a task that the UDF itself would be able to carry out. Conference recommended to the Central Committee that it raise the need for urgent attention to be given by the Alliance to greater coordination between local civic bodies.

The meeting focused on practical problems and experiences. It was felt that the alliance should not be a talking shop. We need to look at problems on the ground. An example of how some unions in the Eastern Cape affiliated to COSATU feel that activists from townships are undermining the independence of the trade unions was raised. Comrades pointed out how such divisions between the community organisation and the comrades in the union can have a harmful effect on every component in the Alliance. This is the type of problem that needs timeous attention so as to

1.5 PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN WORKERS

Despite the repeated commitment of the Party to paying attention to the gender question in its organisational work to ensure the correct social and class composition of the membership, in practice women - and especially women workers - have not been mobilised into our ranks in sufficient numbers. Conference examined this question in a separate discussion. This was introduced by a paper which not only covered the basis in principle for the Party's position in this regard, but in particular tried to overcome past separation of theory and practice by raising a number of practical problems and proposals for future work .

Here are some extracts from this introductory paper:

"Around 50% of our population is made up of women and we need to organise and involve this sector. Although women are this large a number, this is not reflected in representation and participation in our organisations. We urgently need to work out ways to have women asserting themselves. But this is not a women's but a collective problem. And education needs to be done on both sides.

At the Cosatu level their whole organisation of women is not systematic. It has become the norm to put questions relating to women on the table: demands have led to real victories. But the way we do this needs to be examined. At no point do we involve the women in the process of struggle so that they do not feel it as their issue. We lose the whole educational campaign and the activity is not mass activity. Victories are won on behalf of the constituency but the constituency itself is not mobilised. We need to reexamine this.

Some sectors are also difficult to for unions to organise women workers eg domestic workers because of their circumstances. But this is something that must be fed into the mass structures - through them it would really facilitate the unions tackling this sector. We must approach it in a different way from other union work.

We need to prioritise this question."

After discussion and further contributions which took note of the Party's policy to engage in affirmative action with regards to the participation of women in our organisation, conference made the following recommendations:

- * Formulate a code of conduct for Party members which will address issues of morality, sexism etc.
- * In the composition of Party structures particular attention must be given to the place for women without tokenism.
- * Formulate a Campaign around the womens charter.
- * Actively join the Workers charter campaign and within it promote issues of working women.
- * Develop training programmes for women to include aspects such as leadership training etc.
- * Develop an education programme directed to the upliftment of women and to the education of male comrades. This programme to be jointly planned and implemented with men and women.
- * Specific persons to be deployed to look at the role of women.
- * Develop particular approaches to African, Indian and Coloured women workers.
- * Examine ways in which persons involved in trade union negotiations can include womens issues and rights in such negotiations.
- * In addressing the organisation and issues of women we should avoid an approach which is characterised as militant feminism.

1.6 PATH TO POWER:

The discussion of aspects of our programme, "Path to Power", which relate to our strategies for obtaining power in the current situation was a vital part of the meeting. Although it could by no means be considered to be exhaustive or to examine the programme as a whole, it enabled comrades to explore a host of questions we ask of ourselves and are asked by others about how the current talks about obstacles to negotiations affects our strategy.

The extracts below capture how conference viewed this question. A central part of the recommendations made to the Central Committee on these issues concerned the need for the Alliance as a whole to ensure that those who have been appointed to represent any of the three organisations, have a clear perception of the official positions of these organisations and any misunderstandings are speedily and publically corrected. Without this, much uncertainty, confusion and demoralisation can develop.

"Let us first examine what the key elements of our strategy are.

Our Program "The Path to Power" is unambiguous on this. The paramount importance and centrality of the masses in the strategy for seizure of power is emphasised in the very opening sentence of the section on dealing with this question. "The Path to Power" lies with the masses.

But our Program makes the correct point that our armed struggle "has to rely, above all, on the people in active struggle. The working class, in particular, possess vast possibilities to take the war to the nerve centres of apartheid colonialism.", etc.

The "Path to Power" therefore envisaged several forms of struggle, legal and illegal, armed and non-violent. It asserts that we are on the threshold of a revolutionary breakthrough, and that the situation holds out the possibility of an outbreak of insurrection.

It does not, however, dismiss the prospects of a negotiated resolution. In fact, it asserts that "there is no conflict between this insurrectionary perspective and the possibility of a negotiated transfer of power" and that "armed struggle cannot be counterposed with dialogue, negotiations and justifiable compromise, as if they were mutually exclusive categories."

Negotiations, therefore, are only another terrain of struggle. The struggle on other fronts must continue and intensify.

We may in the future depending on progress if negotiations place limit - temporarily or for the time that the negotiations continue - some of our means of struggle. But we should not bail out the regime from the major cause of the crises it is facing - the masses in action. We as a movement have little else to rely on. Our people are our main bastion. Their struggle and sacrifices are the main reason why the regime is being forced to consider negotiations with us.

Our movement can therefore not move away from its militant tradition before there is fundamental change in our society. Before apartheid is dead and buried.

We therefore cannot talk about moving away from mobilisation to organisation as though these are rigidly separated compartments. The organisation and continued mobilisation of our people must proceed simultaneously and with equal zest. And we must increasingly place before them the slogans which firmly address the question of power - the demand for an Interim Government to supervise and guide the process towards the election of a Constituent Assembly.

Harmful trends have begun to appear of people within our ranks trying to outdo each other for moderation in the mass media. Our reasonableness and our commitment to peaceful change and, even to negotiations should never be construed as a signal to the masses to end resistance and struggle against their oppression.

This process must in fact intensify a hundred fold. If conditions have been created for open and peaceful pursuit of political change, nothing should inhibit the strongest possible expression of disciplined militancy by the masses of the oppressed. We can never bargain away our right to protest.

We should insist on discipline. The new situation calls for a responsible blend of discipline and militancy. We are pledged to observe the spirit and letter of the Groote Schuur Minute.

But only by our active participation and presence in peoples' resistance and struggles will we ensure that acts of anarchy, vandalism and provocation, are brought to a minimum.

Negotiation has become a key terrain of struggle. Negotiations has to be rooted among the masses. Intensification of mass struggle must cradle negotiation.

The question of dual power is clouding the issue - many are saying we must sue for dual power. Dual power relates to state power. The issue of dual power as it is being presented at the moment shifts our focus - our central focus should be state power otherwise we may demobilise our people.

The position of the movement is clear. We are opposed to apartheid violence. We cannot throw away our peoples rights to defend themselves against apartheid violence. It is the removal of apartheid violence that will remove the counter violence. Our people must surge on to destroy apartheid.

Conference therefore noted that the movement's exploration of the possibilities of a negotiated resolution is not in conflict with our overall strategy; that what is essential in this context is the continued struggle of the masses to ensure transition to a fully democratic society.

2. CONCLUSIONS:

Conference ended its deliberations in a spirit of confidence and determination. Comrades who were responsible for security, catering and administrative aspects which made the meeting possible, were warmly greeted.

The Conference resolved to submit to the Central Committee the full record of the meeting and the detailed recommendations which we adopted during the final session.

Conference finally recommended to the Central Committee that it prepare a report of the conference in order to deepen and widen the consultation process and to ensure that our decisions are conveyed directly rather than solely through the commercial press.

Conference was characterised by a spirit of determination to firmly occupy the legal space and vigorously prosecute the struggle for liberation. Despite the many dangers present in the current situation participants were optimistic that the emergence of the Party will significantly advance the cause of national liberation and entrench conditions favourable to the advance of our country to a socialist future.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CONFERENCE

1. PARTY OF A NEW TYPE

1.1 VANGUARD / MASS PARTY

The question of whether or not the party transforms itself into a mass party arises because:

- the party can now exist legally.
- the party enjoys tremendous mass support.
- the party needs to become more accountable to the people.

Recommendations:

The party needs to be transformed into one which has a large membership.

The criterion for membership should be:

- a. Acceptance of the party programme.
- b. Acceptance of its resolutions.
- c. Commitment to abide by a code of conduct.
- d. A commitment to engage actively in the pursuit of the party's objective.

It should be noted that although the party may develop a large membership, organised into branches, it would nonetheless remain vanguardist. It will be a vanguard party of a new type. All of its members would be activists. Our members would:

i) do agitational and propaganda work among the people and recruit for the party.

ii) we would embark on our own campaigns - which could involve the ANC and other structures at the local and regional levels. We need to consider a programme of action which the branches of the party have to implement

iii) The party would assert its independence. We cannot just act within other organisations, and even our members in other organisations must become known as members of the party.

It is essential that all communists worthy of the name grasp that the crucial question is that of humanity. Where does this humanity derive from? It derives from being active in the struggle, from knowing what our peoples' demands are, from suffering with the people and knowing what workers are struggling for and demanding. There is a dialectical relationship between the struggle and scientific analysis of social reality.

We need a code of conduct for now to distinguish between simple card-carrying members from a membership which is being moulded into a fighting force true to the people.

1.2 INTERNAL DEMOCRACY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Under conditions of legality the party should practice full internal democracy. This involves major changes to the present party constitution. All levels of leadership - branch, district and central committee - must be directly elected by the membership. There should also be accountability directly to the members. All elected leaders should be subject to recall. Branches should enjoy direct representation to the National Congress.

Our internal democracy tends to reflect a style that favours those that are better read - the ideologues. They get the "bigger vote" ie enjoy greater favour. We need to find a new style which will enable all members to feel that the party really belongs to them.

But in this transformation we must strive to ensure that we have rules to ensure openness whilst remaining compatible with what the party needs.

When a communist commits a serious error before the people we shall not protect such a person. If the people's judgement condemns you, then you are condemned before the party.

1.3 PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY

Urgent attention needs to be given to the manner in which the party can make itself accountable to the people in general and the working class in particular. Public accountability is the principle which we should strive to uphold. We cannot continue to rely only on our own noble intentions.

We could become more accountable by: - holding regular consultations with other organisations outside the alliance like those in the MDM, the churches etc. - holding mass meetings and rallies in the name of the Party. (However these are not sufficient)

How do the people, the working class feel that the party is their party? Even if we have hundreds of thousands of members, how do people relate to the party? Are we relying on our own ability to always do the right thing? What will the mechanism of accountability to the people be?

Through our actions we must strive to demonstrate that we communists are servants of the people. But we must not only serve the people - we must be of the people and constantly with the people. There is a need for us to place ourselves among our people - in the mass organisations at the local level, not only politically but socially and culturally as well. It is through this participation that our humanity and accountability to the people is derived and that we become fully merged with our people.

Communism can be honest, accountable, and democratic - this must come across strongly. Communists have a duty to be an incorruptible force.

We must present facts to the people and the options available and ask people to say to the leadership which option is acceptable. We must not produce a people and membership that is passive. We must inculcate a spirit of challenge leading to dialogue between the vanguard and the masses.

The warning was sounded that despite our present popularity we must not presume that the party is as acceptable to the people as the ANC. We must not be romantic about how people see the party. Activists have waved our flags but the average individual is largely ignorant of communism and many have been brainwashed by anti-communism.

1.4 WORK WITH FRATERNAL ORGANISATIONS

The relationship between the party and the fraternal organisations must change. The time had come for the party to assert its independence and its own identity. The party must organise its own mass events, project its own identity, leadership and policies.

While party members must continue to be deeply involved in the ANC or COSATU, for example, they must now do so as known party members unless otherwise decided.

We must open up formal dialogue with the ANC / COSATU on various issues eg how party leadership is elected? In the process of dialogue and discussions we must clarify the position of the party on negotiations and other issues.

An example of an area of overlap or difference is that of political education. The party requires its own political education programme. The ANC has its political education programme. The relationship between these programme will need to be discussed.

2. CHALLENGE FACING THE PARTY

2.1 CRISIS FACING SOCIALISM

We need to avoid making the mistakes made in the construction of socialism. Some mistakes were:

- * The alienation of the party from the masses; commands and orders from above;
- * the trade unions, women's and other organisations were rubber stamps of the party;
- * Dissent was repressed; etc Our party has a proud history of in our struggle. Our party has always strived not to be remote from the people. But not to rest on our laurels.

In building the legal party, we need to take active steps to ensure that these mistakes do not occur. In the present context it means, amongst other things, that the masses should be intimately associated with the process of negotiations. The party must remain close to the people and learn from them. Party policy must be adjusted around the needs of the people. The necessity of ensuring that the prospects of negotiated settlement must not result in losing sight of goal of political power.

Where we have made mistakes we must admit them. Our ideas on socialism must be opened for discussion and debate.

2.2 PATH TO POWER

a) At our 7th Congress, where the thesis on Path to Power and the role of insurrection was adopted, it was not anticipated that the negotiation process would arise as soon as it had. In the light of developments leading to the Groote Schuur talks we need to ask whether our thesis on seizure of power has become irrelevant. It would be dangerous to assume this. We cannot be sure of the outcome of negotiations. There is always the possibility of a return to repression. White politics is volatile and violent.

b) As a result we need to keep open our options. Obstacles on the road to power and mass struggles and conflict require that we continue to build our revolutionary forces.

c) There was, therefore, a general agreement that our perspective on seizure of power through insurrection in the program should not be abandoned. The building of the revolutionary army, therefore, remains a crucial task of the revolutionary alliance. Development of self-defence units of our people is a necessity anyway. We need to develop the concept of peoples' militia as an important element with MK of a revolutionary army.

d) The inculcation of the correct understanding of the situation and the focus of our peoples' revolutionary energies on the central question of state power is the only insurance for either the seizure of power and/or forcing de Klerk to go the full distance with negotiations.

e) The armed struggle remains in place until new political conditions demand a review of the armed struggle.

f) the masses must be constantly mobilised into action against apartheid; they must not be immobilised or suffocated in any way

g) However, full cognisance has been taken of the changed situation which requires that the possibilities offered by negotiations should be explored to the fullest, while not abandoning the above perspective

h) if the masses are to fulfill their historical mission, they must be part of these processes; they must be informed constantly and directly about the events and tactic of the day by the organisations - not the press.

i) this also applies to leadership persons at all levels, so that they may be enabled to share and articulate a common perspective on the vital political issues of the day.

2.3 PERSPECTIVES ON NEGOTIATIONS

We have to ensure that what happens in the negotiations is not divorced from the masses. The way in which we respond to our people today shapes the way we respond tomorrow. Major obstacles can arise. Our strength at the table depends on what we do on the ground. There is a tendency not to put the questions before the people so that the people feel that the question of obstacles must be confined to the negotiating table.

How to do we involve the masses? The reason that we had a mandate to negotiate was that the preconditions reflected the popular demands of the people. In the same way we need to seek a mandate for the next stage of the negotiations; to argue for a constituent assembly, for the redistribution of wealth etc. We must do this now and not after the December conference.

It is important that struggles taking place at the local level are linked to the question of the negotiation process. It is the masses that should shape the negotiations - we say this, but we must now make it happen

2.4 PROGRAM OF ACTION

The release of the leaders, the unbanning of the ANC and SACP and the talks about talks has not demobilised the masses - but it has left activists and leaders in a state of confusion and relative immobility. While we need to exploit the negotiating process, we must avoid the danger of suffocating the mass struggle.

What we need to do is look at possibilities of taking a major initiative which would capture the energies of the people. The spark is being lost. We need to galvanise people into action once again. This time we need to be prepared to take advantage of the energy unleashed to be able to create the structures of organs of people power

Much work is being done in order to build the ANC legally. This, however, is being done at the expense of mass campaigns which could come to pose a challenge to the regime. Branches of the ANC are not being presented with a programmed of mass action. Often, we are doing no more than preparing for an election campaign.

It is recommended that:

- a nationally co-ordinated mass campaign be launched. - the central political demands of our mass campaigns should be for the vote, for an interim government, for a democratically elected constituent assembly, and for a redistribution of the land and wealth. In this way the masses would shape the character of negotiations.
- the spirit of defiance must be given direction. Our mass marches and other forms of action must be transformed from acts of mere protest to acts which challenge the authority of the regime.
- the broad anti - apartheid forces need to be consolidated.
- urgent attention needs to be given to the generation of propaganda in this period.

It is premature to discuss the question of our role in the constituent assembly precisely because we are in a transitional stage.

2.5 BANTUSTANS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

There is an urgent need for our movement to address this burning issue. We must agitate the people to put pressure on the bantustans to democratise the structures so that when the question of incorporation is raised the people agree only to be incorporated into a democratic South Africa.

It would be a mistake for us to say our people should discard the original demand of the dismantling of the homeland - correct maybe in Transkei, Ciskei Venda but not in other bantustans. If people in Natal demand that kwa zulu be reincorporated now, they would be better off. Regarding the dissolution of the township authorities, it is better that people demand one council for the whole town right now.

The disintegration of the bantustans and the Black Local Authorities requires a response as a matter of urgency. We have thus far failed to take full advantage of the breakdown and provide direction.

3. SACP-ANC-COSATU ALLIANCE

3.1 GENERAL GUIDELINES

a) alliance to operate at three main levels : national, regional, local

b) workers' issues should be on the agenda at all times

c) alliance not a talk shop

d) alliance should respect independence of each organ and foster inter-dependence

e) must respect the independent decision-making processes of each member of the alliance

f) find ways of involving the masses at all times

g) unity in action most effective in allowing for the development of effective communication and better understanding

h) continually find ways of drawing in greater range of forces into campaigns

3.2 SACP-ANC-COSATU

a) there is the need to move towards a structured relationship, although this must happen over time- the emphasis must be on decisiveness and capacity to act

b) the GS's of the structures should immediately enter into formalised contact - a JOINT PLANNING COMMITTEE should be established soon

c) this revolutionary alliance should map out the strategy and tactics on basis of the tripartite arrangement

d) the campaigns of the alliance will operate in their own right; each structure would still have their own campaigns;

e) there is an urgent need for the revolutionary alliance to launch a powerful mass offensive on the principal political demands of the day

3.3 SACP-COSATU

a) establish a "workers forum" to formalise bilateral relations between the party and COSATU

b) this can lead to joint projects eg in political education , research etc

c) this bilateral relationship does not preclude bilateral relations between the SACP and ANC or the ANC and COSATU.

3.4 LOCAL JOINT ORGANS

a) the local committees are vital; this is where democratic grassroots decisions are made; this is where the work gets done; they must be encouraged and guided in their work

b) this is the site where the widest range of forces can be drawn into the mass offensive

3.5 BUILD THE ANC

a) this is a vital task

b) ensure that the internal tensions of members of the alliance are not transferred to the alliance

3.5 MASS ORGANISATIONS / SECTORAL STRUCTURES

a) party members must play vital role in the development of the mass organisations (MO)

b) party members in these organisations will operate under the discipline of these organisations

c) the mass organisations must be part of the decision-making processes and the planning and implementation of campaigns

d) MO should be the BASIC ORGANS of PEOPLE'S POWER - and therefore should not be subsumed under the ANC

e) the party and the ANC must take responsibility to enhance organisation of other sectors eg health, education; etc

f) build the civics

3.6 POSITION OF THE UDF

Party and ANC members are and have played important roles in the UDF. We should not create unnecessary overlaps in treating the UDF as another entity of the alliance. At the same time the magnificent role played by the UDF membership must be sensitively taken into account in the transitional period- the UDF constituency cannot be merely by-passed. The ultimate relationship with the UDF will be determined once its transformation has been completed.

5. MOBILISATION AND ORGANISATION OF WOMEN

a) Formulate a code of conduct for Party members which will address issues of morality, sexism etc.

b) In the composition of Party structures particular attention must be given to affirmative action for women - without tokenism.

c) Formulate a Campaign around the women's charter

d) Actively promote the Workers charter campaign and within it promote issues of working women

e) Develop training programmes for women which include aspects such as leadership training etc.

f) Develop an education programme directed to the upliftment of women and to the education of male comrades. This programme to be jointly planned and implemented by men and women

g) Specific persons to be deployed to attend to the role of women.

h) Develop specific approaches to Indian and Coloured women workers and to African women workers

i) Ensure that the issues affecting women which are included in negotiations are also the focus of mobilisation and discussion among the ranks of the women workers.

5. ORGANISING A LEGAL PARTY.

5.1. Our first requirement is to ensure that the consultation process with our underground structures and the key figures in the MDM continues. Consultations should aim at obtaining the suggestions and advice on how the Party should be launched and how it should proceed to establish itself. It was emphasised that religious organisations and groups should also be approached in order to explain the Party's true position.

5.2. The recommendation of appointing a Communist Party Interim Leadership Group was unanimously endorsed.

The group should command respect and confidence, have a high degree of capability, and reflect the social base we seek to represent. We must ensure a strong emphasis on the African working class and include women and intellectuals. The ILG would be reinforced by Central Committee members able to return home. The ILG is to be entrusted with the task of launching the Party, setting up sub-committees and structures and providing leadership in the transition period. Suggested names have been recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

5.3. It was agreed that the following sub-committees be set up: - Propaganda and Information; - Education and research; - Finance; - Security;

There should be a chairperson and secretary as well as an organising secretary with a small staff of assistants.

5.4. Need to priorities the setting up of Districts in key cities and regions. The following were identified:

- Johannesburg - East Rand; - West Rand; - Port Elizabeth; - Cape Town;
- East London; - Durban; - Bloemfontein;

But these to be subject to further consideration through the consultative process.

5.5 Districts are to establish local branches. We need to give further consideration as to whether these should be industrially as well as residentially based.

5.6 Guidelines for recruitment and setting up of branches and district committees need to be drafted but we recommend that this be based on acceptance of Party policy and programme, strategy and tactics, payment of subscriptions and preparedness to be an activist with the discipline and accountability this commitment requires.

5.7 A national launch should take place at a mass outdoor rally in a main city. The majority recommended Johannesburg but some comrades felt that the Eastern Cape could also be considered. The majority felt that if a decision was taken soon a successful launch could take place on the Saturday or Sunday 28th -29th July 1990. This would require that the Party's Internal Leadership Group is appointed a minimum of one month beforehand. Such a launch needs careful consideration and consultation with effective preparation.

6. PARTY PROPAGANDA

6.1 FORMS OF PUBLICATIONS AND MEDIA:

6.1.1 Umsebenzi: The flagship role of this publication was acknowledged. The recommendations in regard to this publication include:

- a) increase the distribution many fold
- b) change from a free publication to one which readers pay for
- c) increase frequency of publication - possibly monthly
- d) all party members to implement the call to create Umsebenzi study circle.

6.1.2 AC: Consideration need to be given to:

- a) Establish it as a journal which encourages socialist debate within the country
- b) Encourage greater participation in this publication
- c) Change the content radically - make more alive and closer to the people
- d) Make it a South African rather than an African Journal
- e) There were two views on the future of the AC:
 - i) a radical transformation - Set up an independent trust which will take responsibility for the journal ie no longer a formal party journal; - Change of name - change in content and style as suggested above
 - ii) a modification of AC - that the AC will improve by become located at home but that it should remain the theoretical journal of the party with the necessary changes in style and content. - the above changes can still be introduced

6.1.3 NEWSPAPER - Weekly:

Strong recommendation that a weekly be established. This should be directed to the workers and factory based distribution systems should be used. Start with even a one page weekly. It should be simple in language, with eye-catching layout, plenty of photographs and illustrations.

6.1.4 Leaflets:

Creative use should be made of leaflets

6.1.5 Use more and different forms of propaganda and media eg take into account the popularity of t-shirts

6.2 LANGUAGE AND FORMAT:

It was recommended that:

6.2.1 the Party publications be reproduced in the vernacular languages

6.2.2 the format of specific publication must take into account that in many places there is no electricity; low level of literacy, etc.

6.3 FINANCES:

6.3.1 Examine ways of establishing a financial base.

6.3.2 Consideration to be given to a company being floated with shares being sold to COSATU members, MDM persons etc. to set up a commercially run printing facility.

6.3.3 Recover some costs of publications from sale of literature; T-shirts and other party goods.

6.4 DISTRIBUTION:

Distribution of our publications takes place through our own structures and through the support of our allies. It was recommended that:

6.4.1 this distribution system be established on a sounder basis.

6.4.2 Get the support of COSATU and its affiliates in giving upfront cash donation for publications which are then distributed through its membership

6.5 REPRODUCTION:

6.5.1 In the short-term we need to approach allies and use their facilities to produce our publications particularly Umsebenzi at cost.

6.5.2 Commission facilities that are not being used or which have surplus capacity to reproduce publications.

6.5.3 Aim to establishing our own facilities in the medium term

6.5.4 Establish a feasibility group that explores and gives meaning to the above recommendations

6.5.5 continue to maintain, use and improve our clandestine printing facilities

6.6 PROPAGANDA AS AN ORGANISING TOOL

6.6 1 Reference Point We need a situation where people use our propaganda as a reference point

6.6.2 Distribution

6.6.2.1 Our publications cannot be distributed commercially as this is controlled by a monopoly. Distribution systems will have to be our own through our structure and through our allies.

6.6.2.2 Establish factory committees for the distribution of propaganda

The resolutions committee found that not enough attention was given to the organising process and the more specific ways in which propaganda could be used as an organising tool. This matter should be given more attention in the future.

A model for consideration: based on the party's call to set up Umsebenzi study circles.

