

SPECIAL ISSUE

UMSEBENZI

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VOICE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY

BEWARE THE TRAPS AHEAD!

The situation is full of promise for a major advance. But it is also full of traps. And the key question facing all of us is how to guide the advance without falling into the traps.

In general, there are two extreme positions which spell danger for the future of our struggle. The one is to maintain that nothing has really changed. This would close our minds to certain tactical readjustments needed to build on the victories already scored. The other is to exaggerate the meaning of the changes. This could lead to an abandonment or toning down of those aspects of our strategy which made those victories possible and which will lay the basis for the ultimate victory.

The need, therefore, to reflect on the relationship between our strategy and tactics in our developing situation has never been greater. It calls for both flexibility and adherence to principle.

It is plain that the regime's tactical approach has shifted. It is responding to mounting internal struggle and external pressure and its failure to contain and reverse the people's militancy. There is, however, no doubt that, in all essential respects, De Klerk's shift is designed to continue old policies by other means. **But merely to say this is not enough.** In order to assess the significance of the shift for our own tactical approaches, we need to go further.

Firstly, the fact that the regime is forced to change course creates certain new conditions of struggle which cannot be ignored. Events have already shown that the 'new means' have also opened **new space** for advance.

Secondly, we should not judge the effect of an enemy's initiatives solely by its intentions. History has shown over and over again that the objective results of an action often turn out to be the very opposite of what was intended.

In short, it is, above all, our responses which will play the key role in determining whether De Klerk's tactical readjustment will result in holding back or advancing our cause. We must undoubtedly make full use of whatever new space has opened up. But in doing so we must not be trapped into positions which will play into the regime's hands.

What are the main danger areas, and how do we avoid them?

- We must frustrate the regime's intention to trap us into substituting 'legal' protest politics for active resistance, defiance and armed challenge. These terrains of struggle must be pursued with mounting vigour; they must not be treated as alternatives.
- A new relationship is clearly beginning to emerge between legal and illegal work. But this should not tempt us to overlook the borderline between the two. **The style of our legal work must make it less easy for the regime to 'justify' going back to its previous positions. At the same time, we must use the space won and even expand it without burning our strategic boats.** Legal and illegal work are both separate and inter-connected terrains of

