

## RECOMMENDATIONS OF CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE

### 1. MESSAGE TO CDE 17

That we should convey to him our acknowledgement of his message and send him greetings and wishes for a speedy recovery.

### 2. PARTY OF A NEW TYPE

#### 2.1 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.

## 2.2 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" i.e. 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.

## 2.3 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.

## 2.4 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 programmes will need to be discussed.

## 3. CHALLENGE FACING THE PARTY

### 3.1 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.

### 3.2 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.



### 3.3 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

### 3.4 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.

### 3.5 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.

## 4. SACP-ANC-COSATU ALLIANCE

### 4.1 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

### 4.2 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

#### 4.3 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.

#### 4.4 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

#### 4.5 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

#### 4.6 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

#### 4.7 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.

### 6. ORGANISING A LEGAL PARTY.

6.1. 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.



6.2. 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.

6.3. 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.

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

- Johannesburg 1
- East Rand;
- West Rand;
- Port Elizabeth; 2
- Cape Town; 3
- East London; 4
- Durban; 5
- Bloemfontein;

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

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

6.6 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.

6.7 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.

## 7. PARTY PROPAGANDA

7.1 Forms of publications and medi

7.1.1 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.

7.1.2 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

7.1.3 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.

7.1.4 Leaflets:

Creative use should be made of leaflets

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

## 7.2 Language and format:

It was recommended that:

- 7.2.1 the Party publications be reproduced in the vernacular languages
- 7.2.2 the format of specific publication must take into account that in many places there is no electricity; low level of literacy, etc.

## 7.3 Finances:

- 7.3.1 Examine ways of establishing a financial base.
- 7.3.2 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.
- 7.3.3 Recover some costs of publications from sale of literature; T-shirts and other party goods.

## 7.4 Distribution:

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

- 7.4.1 this distribution system be established on a sounder basis.
- 7.4.2 Get the support of COSATU and its affiliates in giving upfront cash donation for publications which are then distributed through its membership

## 7.5. Reproduction:

- 7.5.1 In the short-term we need to approach allies and use their facilities to produce our publications particularly Umsebenzi at cost.
- 7.5.2 Commission facilities that are not being used or which have surplus capacity to reproduce publications.
- 7.5.3 Aim to establishing our own facilities in the medium term
- 7.5.4 Establish a feasibility group that explores and gives meaning to the above recommendations
- 7.5.5 Continue to maintain, use and improve our clandestine printing facilities

## 7.6 Propaganda as an organising tool

- 7.6.1 Reference Point We need a situation where people use our propaganda as a reference point
- 7.6.2 Distribution

- 7.6.2.1 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.
- 7.6.2.2 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.

