

**UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND**

**THE ROLE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY  
(SACP) IN THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION IN SOUTH  
AFRICA, C.1921-2015**

**SPHAMANDLA SIYABONGA GUMEDE**

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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AFRICA, C.1921-2015**

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## QUOTATIONS

*"To eventually win the majority of our people for a socialist South Africa, we must spread socialist awareness and socialist consciousness now, mainly among the workers but also among the rural poor and the middle strata. We must also ensure that the working class emerges as the politically-dominant social class in the post-apartheid state. This can only be achieved if the working class wins a place now as the leading social force in the inter-class liberation alliance" (Joe Slovo, 1988).*

*"It is no secret that we are confronting a very challenging period in our national democratic revolution with risks, threats and but also important opportunities and responsibilities. It is also no secret that across our ANC-led Alliance more and more comrades are turning to the SACP to engage with our collective analysis of the global, regional and national conjuncture and to point to a programmatic line of action. It is no secret that of the different components that constitute our ANC-led alliance, the SACP is the most stable and relatively the most ideologically coherent. The rapid and historically unprecedented growth of our membership – now standing at some 240,000 members attests to this. It is no accident that there are increasing complaints in the right-wing media about the growing influence of the SACP within government and within our Alliance."*  
(Blade Nzimande, 08 July 2015)

**APPROVAL****APPROVAL**

**This thesis has been read and approved in fulfilment of the academic requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in History, Department of History, Faculty of Arts, University of Zululand, South Africa.**

**01/11/2021**

.....

**Date**.....**Dr Maxwell Zakhele Shamase****SUPERVISOR**

## DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis "**THE ROLE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY (SACP) IN THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION IN SOUTH AFRICA**" represents my own work and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and properly acknowledged for future reference.



By.....

**Student Name: Sphamandla Siyabonga Gumede**

## **DEDICATION**

This research work is gallantly dedicated to my father Bhekabantu Gumede and my loving mother Thoko Busangani, for their love and trust in educational pursuit.

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-Finally, God Almighty for enabling me to get through the challenges of this thesis.

## ABSTRACT

*This research study addresses the role of the South African Communist Party (SACP) in the liberation struggle from its inception, through the apartheid era to post-apartheid epoch. The South African Communist Party (SACP) had a strong grip on the African National Congress (ANC) on questions of theory, strategy and tactics of the national liberation struggle. It is argued in this thesis that the SACP produced vast reading material such as the African Communist to exert its influence in the liberation struggle through the ANC. They contributed immensely in the drafting of the Freedom Charter which in turn shaped the political perspectives of the ANC. This thesis asserts that Joe Slovo contributed to the ANC's "Two Phase Theory" revolution for which the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) perspective was premised. This theory and perspective logically led to the formation of the 'Mass Democratic Movement' strategy which accommodated everybody from committed revolutionaries, moderates, reformists, opportunists, reactionaries, puppets and dissenters. Slovo argued that it is the inclusiveness of everybody and everything that makes the NDR democratic and national and therefore justifiable. Thus, by implication, communists intentionally took the ANC and its allies through a reformist path. Emerging from this thesis is a narrative that says it is not for revolutionaries to do anything nonrevolutionary, anti-socialist and liberal in orientation and character for the sake of convenience. The crucial contributions made by Slovo equal to the Two Stage theory and which shaped the South African anti-colonial struggle were two pieces of work, viz, 'Colonialism of a Special Type' ( i.e. Settler Colonialism) and the 'Sunset Clause' respectively. The two, Colonialism of a Special Type and the Sunset Clause professed that the colonized and exploited workers had to co-exist with the oppressors and exploiters. The theory of colonialism of special type has as its main function to explain the fact that SA colonizers are 'live-in' colonizers. The logic of this analysis led to the conclusion that the 'anti-colonial' struggle should not be to drive the colonizers away but to reconcile with them, hence 'power sharing mechanism' which produced the 1994 government of national 'unity'. This colonialism of special type theory that promoted 'power' sharing and 'reconciliation' flowed from Moscow's policy shift from supporting armed struggle to advocating negotiated settlement as the preferred solution. It is also premised on the Freedom Charter's declaration that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it". The Sunset Clause, also written by Joe Slovo, was intended to focus the attention of the masses to the gradual removal of settler colonial racists from power positions not the overthrow of the entire state machinery.*

## NGOKUFINGQIWE

*Lolucwaningo lubheka futhi luhlaziye igalelo lenhlangano yezombusazwe yamaKomanisi eyaziwa futhi edume ngokuthi yi-South African Communist Party (SACP), yaseNingizimu ne-Afrika, kusukela ibunjwa kuya ezikhathini zobandlululo kuze kube ngale komzabalazo wenkululeko yabantu baseNingizimu ne-Afrika ababecindezelwe. Lolucwaningo lukubeka ngokusobala ukuthi Inhlangano yamaKomanisi yaba negalelo elikhulu kakhulu kwinjulalulwazi, amaqhinga nakumhlahlandlela wezombusazwe iqhuba phambili umbutho kaKhongolose, phecelezi, i-African National Congress (ANC). AmaKomanisi abamba iqhaza elikhulu ekukhiqizweni kwemibhalo, imiqulu nemiqondo yezombusazwe ekwesekeni uKhongolose. Umqulu wenkululeko owaziwa ngokuthi yi-'Freedom Charter' wawuqethe imibono eminingi evela kumaKomanisi. Yiwo lomqulu owaba ngumhlahlandlela emzabalazweni wenkululeko eNingizimu ne-Afrika. Umnumzane u Joe Slovo owayengunobhala-jikelele wamaKomanisi wabamba iqhaza elikhulu eqhingeni lombhedukazwe womzabalazo elaziwa ngokuthi i-'National Democratic Revolution' elizigaba zimbili. Leliqinga lifaka uwonke wonke okuxuba abashokobezi, abongabazane, abenkolo, nalo lonke uhlobo lwenkolelo ekufikeni ekugcineni kwenkululeko yezombusazwe. UJoe Slovo waba ngusomaqhinga ekubhalweni komqulu owahlahla indlela yezingxoxo zokuthula ezawelisa lelizwe enkululekweni nasekuhlalisaneni ngokuthula kwezinhlanga zonke. Lokho kwasho ukuthi ababengabacindezeli nababecindezelwe bemukelane ngoba kungekho owayezokwehlula omunye ngempi noma ngodlame aze amxoshe kulelizwe. Kwakusho futhi ukuthi wonke umuntu uyisakhhamuzi sakulelizwe ngokomlando (Colonialism of a special type). Lokho kwaholela okhethweni lukazwelonke olwakha uhulumeni wobambiswano phakathi kwabacindezeli nabacindezelwe. Kwakukhona umcabango wokuthi izinhlaka zobandlululo nezinsila zalo emiqondweni yabakhele lelizwe kuyomele kugudluzwe kancane kancane kuze kuphele kuthi nya. Nabacindezeli ababeqhoqhobele ezombusazwe nezikhundla eziphezulu ezinhlakeni zombusazwe bayonikwa isikhathi ukuba baziqhelele bona noma bakhishwe kufakwe abacindezelwe (Sunset Clauses). Luncane ucwaningo olunzulu noluseqophelweni eliphezulu ngegalelo laloMbutho wamaKomanisi emzabalazweni wokulwa nobandlululo. Lolucwaningo-ke lugxile kulokho okungazange kwacwaningwa ngeso lobunyoningco esigabeni semfundo yamazanga aphezulu. Lomsebenzi uphinde uveze ukuzihlela kabusha kwamaKomanisi emva kwenkululeko nokuthi acabanga ukuthi lelizwe lizoyaphi kusukela manje.*

**ACRONYMS**

ANC	African National Congress
ANCYL	African National Congress Youth League
COD	Congress of Democrats
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
COMINTERN	Communist International
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CPSA	Communist Party of South Africa
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
DA	Democratic Alliance
GEAR	Growth Employment and Redistribution
ICU	Industrial Commercial Union
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISL	International Socialist League
MEC	Members of Executive Councils
MP	Members of Parliament
NDR	National Democratic Revolution
NEDLAC	National Economic Development and Labour Council
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NEHAWU	National Health and Allied Workers Union
NUMSA	National Union of Metalworkers
NP	National Party
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress

SA	South Africa
SACP	South African Communist party
SACPO	South African Coloured People's Organisation
SAIC	South African Indian Congress
SG	Secretary General
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
UDF	United Democratic Front
UL	University of Limpopo
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
YCLSA	Young Communist League of South Africa

## **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

This study aimed at delving into the role played by the South African Communist Party (SACP) in the Struggle for Liberation in South Africa. It also aimed at giving an exposition of the role it played in the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) and Transition period in South Africa. Founded in 1921 and dissolved in 1950 in the face of banning by the Nationalist Party government under the Suppression of Communism Act), The Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) was re-established underground in 1953 as South African Communist Party (SACP) by members of the dissolved party and legalized in 1990 after decades of clandestine and exile existence despite ruthless government efforts to destroy it.

Thus, the SACP emerged from the anti-apartheid underground at a complex historical intersection, and a peculiar mix of fortunes lay before it. The Cold War was over and the Soviet bloc was disintegrating. The socialist ideal was in tatters, and contemporary liberal observers predicted the 'end of history'. A new global epoch lay ahead that has since shown itself to be characterised by trends and perspectives that set it apart from the period spanning the end of the First World War to the final overthrow of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in 1991. The effect on Marxist-Leninist and socialist parties in the west was fundamental, and the early 1990s were a period of intense soul-searching amongst Left activists and intellectuals.

Nowhere was this more so than in the SACP which had traditionally been one of the most closely aligned to the Soviet Union and happily endorsed the political orthodoxy that emanated from Moscow with apparently little reflection. On the other hand, at the very time that its ideological foundations crumbled in the dust of the Berlin Wall, the SACP was catapulted to prominence in South Africa on the overwhelmingly legitimate struggle against apartheid. The party returned from exile to a mixed reception in that it was at once the object of curious and apprehensive attention by the mainstream media, and the source of massive popular support by legions of young anti-apartheid activists who could now openly associate with it.

The historic task of the Communist Party is the abolition of the capitalist system, and through socialist transformation of the economy of the country, to attain a classless Communist Society. However, At a time when the majority of the people are subject to the most vicious and degrading national oppression, when White colonialist reaction imposes a rule of terror on the whole population and sacrifices the people's living standards on the altar of White supremacy, the central and immediate task of the Communist Party is to lead the fight for the national liberation of the non-white people, and for the victory of the democratic revolution.

Members of the Party worked hard to build up the trade union movement, the African National Congress and other organisations of the people. Hated, slandered and persecuted by the ruling

classes, the Party grew to become the outstanding champion of the oppressed and working people in every struggle against exploitation and national oppression. Combining legal mass work with the illegal work of building the Marxist-Leninist Party as the disciplined vanguard of the fight for freedom, democracy, peace and socialism, the South African Communist Party is the heir to the tradition created by the Communist Party of South Africa.

The South African Communist Party (SACP) had a strong grip on the African National Congress (ANC) on questions of theory, strategy and tactics of the national liberation struggle and controlled the ANC. It could be argued that the SACP produced vast reading material such as the African Communist to exert its influence in the liberation struggle through the ANC. They contributed immensely in the drafting of the Freedom Charter which in turn shaped the political perspectives of the ANC. Joe Slovo contributed to the ANC's "Two Phase Theory" revolution for which the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) perspective was premised.

This theory and perspective logically led to the formation of the 'Mass Democratic Movement' strategy which accommodated everybody from committed revolutionaries, moderates, reformists, opportunists, reactionaries, puppets and dissenters. Slovo argued that it is the inclusiveness of everybody and everything that makes the NDR democratic and national and therefore justifiable. Thus, by implication, communists intentionally took the ANC and its allies through a reformist path. It could be argued that it is not for revolutionaries to do anything non-revolutionary, anti-socialist and liberal in orientation and character for the sake of convenience.

The crucial contributions made by Slovo equal to the Two Stage theory and which shaped the South African anti-colonial struggle were two pieces of work, viz, 'Colonialism of a Special Type' ( i.e. Settler Colonialism) and the 'Sunset Clause' respectively. Thus the two, Colonialism of a Special Type and the Sunset Clause, professed that the colonized and exploited workers had to co-exist with the oppressors and exploiters. The theory of colonialism of special type has as its main function to explain the fact that SA colonizers are 'live-in' colonizers. The logic of this analysis led to the conclusion that the 'anti-colonial' struggle should not be to drive the colonizers away but to reconcile with them, hence 'power sharing mechanism' which produced the 1994 government of national 'unity'.

This colonialism of special type theory that promoted 'power' sharing and 'reconciliation' flowed from Moscow's policy shift from supporting armed struggle to advocating negotiated settlement as the preferred solution. It is also premised on the Freedom Charter's declaration that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it". The Sunset Clause, also written by Joe Slovo, was intended to focus the attention of the masses to the gradual removal of settler colonial racists from power positions not the overthrow of the entire state machinery.

Nevertheless, events following the unbanning of the ANC, SACP and the PAC in 1990 took many “strugglers” by surprise. The peaceful settlement process was further formalised in 1990 by the Groote Schuur Minute that heralded the start of formal meetings between the ANC and the government, the Pretoria Minute in which the ANC suspended the armed struggle, and the National Peace Accord of 14 September 1991 that was signed by 27 political organisations and homeland governments to prepare the way for the CODESA (Convention for a Democratic South Africa) negotiations. A further surprise was that the negotiated settlement left a capitalist system in place.

According to Legassick, this represented a series of compromises made by the ANC/SACP leadership based upon the fact that MK forces were too weak to secure an alternative. Another decisive factor at that time was the collapse of the Soviet Union and the radical mutation in what was then the Bipolar World Order. Small confrontations between “communists” and “pro-western states” were rapidly going out of vogue and both sides were running out of (secret) money. This then was the strategy of the negotiations leading to the 1994 elections which the ANC won in alliance with the SACP and COSATU, which resulted in the 1996 constitution. Trevor Manuel in 1996 became custodian of the economy as Minister of Finance after Chris Liebenberg, and Nelson Mandela (Madiba) and Desmond Tutu spoke of the dream of the Rainbow Nation and nation building and reconciliation. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was to be the main implement of redress and the economy was market related. The “1996 class project” derailed the NDR: The emergence of the 1996 class project has seen our historically shared perspective on the NDR, especially its broad socialist orientation being challenged in favour of a capitalist-oriented National Democratic State.

The rise and domination of the 1996 class-project in the ANC and government has displaced the working class as a leading motive force of the NDR, in favour of other class forces, in particular the emerging black capitalist class. Policies such as GEAR, Black Economic Empowerment, etc. have ensured that the elite, including the black and white petty-bourgeoisie and capitalist class are the main beneficiaries since the 1994 democratic breakthrough”. The economic policies of that time that were market orientated left, according to critics, the colonialist, imperialist economy unaffected by the political transition, with the result that the Blacks were still on the outside, in fact “un-liberated.” The SACP resolved to give concrete expression to the NDR “as a revolution towards socialism.” The first draft of the document regarding reviewing and re-organizing the SACP was unveiled at the Augmented Central Committee in 2014. It was then amended and circulated thereafter to Party structures for internal discussion. It was in preparation for the 3rd Special National Congress (July 2015) and the 14th National Congress (July 2017) in terms of the resolutions of the 13th National Congress (July 2012).

## CHAPTER ONE:

### AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

#### 1. Introduction

Communism in South Africa has been regularly near the centre of South African political discourse ever since the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. Its major proponents have been the Communist Party of South Africa (founded in 1921 and dissolved in 1950 in the face of banning by the Nationalist Party government under the Suppression of Communism Act). The immediate predecessor of the Communist Party of South Africa was the International Socialist League (founded in 1915)<sup>1</sup>. It was succeeded by the South African Communist Party, (established underground in 1953 by members of the dissolved party and legalized in 1990 after decades of clandestine and exile existence despite ruthless government efforts to destroy it).

Its major opponents have been, most notably, successive South African governments and their business allies, but also various African political leaders and white liberals opposed to the government. Both its proponents and opponents have claimed that communism was in the forefront of militant opposition to the apartheid regime's political and economic order. Locked in bitter antagonism, both fervent communists and vehement anti-communists nevertheless have agreed that the party was one of the leading organizations challenging the racial and economic status quo.

Thus, the SACP emerged from the anti-apartheid underground at a complex historical intersection, and a peculiar mix of fortunes lay before it. The Cold War was over and the Soviet bloc was disintegrating. The socialist ideal was in tatters, and contemporary liberal observers predicted the 'end of history'.<sup>2</sup> A new global epoch lay ahead that has since shown itself to be characterised by trends and perspectives that set it apart from the period spanning the end of the First World War to the final overthrow of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in 1991.<sup>3</sup> The effect on Marxist-Leninist and socialist parties in the west was fundamental, and the early 1990s were a period of intense soul-searching amongst Left activists and intellectuals.

Nowhere was this more so than in the SACP which had traditionally been one of the most closely aligned to the Soviet Union and happily endorsed the political orthodoxy that emanated from Moscow with apparently little reflection. On the other hand, at the very time that its ideological foundations crumbled in the dust of the Berlin Wall, the SACP was

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<sup>1</sup> David Ivon Jones: (1995) *The South African Communist Party-65 Years in the Frontline of Struggle*, London: Core Publications pp.1-6.

<sup>2</sup> S. Adams: (1997) "What's Left? The South African Communist Party After Apartheid." *Review of African Political Economy*, 72: pp.237-248.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

catapulted to prominence in South Africa on the overwhelmingly legitimate struggle against apartheid. The party returned from exile to a mixed reception in that it was at once the object of curious and apprehensive attention by the mainstream media, and the source of massive popular support by legions of young anti-apartheid activists who could now openly associate with it. The Party's new constituency seemed oblivious to the reality that Marxism-Leninism was experiencing a crisis of legitimacy from which it would never recover.

## 2. Literature Review

This study dealt with the role played by the South African Communist Party (SACP) in the Struggle for Liberation in South Africa. The SACP has proved to be ideological in its orientation and operation. The 9/11 attack, the subsequent “*War on Terror*”, the “*Arab Spring*”, the elections in the USA (among many other events) and closer to the South African cultural, historical and political fabric, Afrikaner Nationalism and “*the struggle*” are all actions, acts or programmes of political action based on an ideology or ideologies.

*“Ideology is present wherever policy making is present, and policy making is the attempt to solve problems.”<sup>4</sup>*

Seen as such, ideology is a nearly omnipresent motivator of human action, influencing the daily fabric of life itself. When described in this way it is useful to define ideology as: “*sets of political beliefs involving programs of political action which draw on large-scale views about human nature and/or historical development.*”<sup>5</sup>

In South Africa the National Democratic Revolution (a progressive ideology with radical origins) is the ideology of the governing alliance. Blade Nzimande, General Secretary of the South African Communist Party, testifies to this:

*“The character, content and direction of the NDR are of fundamental importance to our Alliance [the ANC, COSATU and the SACP] since the deepening and consolidating of the national democratic revolution is the glue that holds our alliance together.”<sup>6</sup>*

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<sup>4</sup> M. Seliger, *Ideology and politics*. London: Allen & Unwin. Shubin, V. 2008. *ANC, a view from Moscow*. Cape Town: Mega Digital, p. 105.

<sup>5</sup> G.K. Browning, *Political ideologies*. (In Axford, B., Browning, G.K., Hugging, R. & Rosamond, B., [eds.] *Politics: an introduction*. 252- 294.

<sup>6</sup> B. Nzimande, 2011b. *Building working class hegemony through the forthcoming local government elections*. Umsebenzi Online, 10(5), 2 Mar.

In order to proceed with an investigation of this ideology it is necessary to discover its roots.

The definition of ideology given by Browning and similar definitions, although useful, firstly illustrate the fact that the word “*ideology*” has been the victim of a transformative logic that produced various avatars that differ in substantial meaning, rendering the concept [deliberately] vague. Secondly, ideology is a discursive concept which has been used by different people at different times for different ends, each for the purpose of argument or discussion, defining and using the concept as a tool to suit the problem rather than as a clarifier or arbiter. Thirdly, the very notion of ideology seeks to grasp the changing aspects of history and focuses itself on continuous reassessment as well as dissent and contest.<sup>7</sup> This leads to the myriad of definitions spoken of previously, as well as actual uncertainty as to the core meaning of the concept of ideology.

This leads Seliger to conclude:

*“despite the numerous studies which deal directly or inter alia with ideology...no generally accepted definition of the term exists”* (a problem he himself addresses later on in his work).<sup>8</sup>

When laden concepts such as “*radical*” or “*revolutionary*” and “*ideological*” are combined, uncertainty predominates and (ironically) it is seldom an academic standard that gives meaning, but rather a personal opinion resulting in a utilitarian vagueness. Revolution is one of Seliger’s “problems” remarked on above. Callinicos defines a revolution as a

*“rapid and forcible transfer of state power that contributes to a decisive acceleration in a process of broader social transformation.”*<sup>9</sup>

This arguably defines the act of revolution, which radical ideologies to a lesser or greater extent sees as

*“the way to attain the broad societal transformation they want to achieve. A revolution or at least revolutionary change is thus a definitive component of a radical philosophy.”*<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Z. Bauman, *In search of politics*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1999, p. 109.

<sup>8</sup> M. Seliger, *Ideology and politics*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1976, p.13.

<sup>9</sup> A. Callinicos, *What does revolution mean in the twenty-first century?* Palgrave Macmillan, 1982, p.152

<sup>10</sup> L.P. Baradat, *Political ideologies: their origins and impact*, New York, Routledge, 2016, p.18

Edward Roux, an SACP member from the party's inception until the mid-1930s, wrote two detailed books drawing upon his own experiences, documented further from unpublished party documents and personal letters and from published sources. Both books were pioneering accounts of the SACP, the international Socialist League (ISL) and the broader black struggle against white domination in which many of the important events, particularly those concerning the policy and activities of the SACP pertaining to black politics and social movements, are described and analyzed.<sup>9</sup> In both books, but particularly in the biography of S. P. Bunting, major attention was given to S. P. Bunting's (and Roux's) response to the controversial slogan, an independent native South African republic, which was proposed and imposed upon the SACP by the Communist International in 1928.

R. K. Cope, a South African writer, published in the mid-1940s a semi-official biography of W.H. Andrews, the most prominent white communist trade unionist who had been active in labour and socialist politics since the turn of the century.<sup>10</sup> The book, based in part upon Andrews' personal papers, is an invaluable source for the early history of left-wing socialism. A less useful, but still relevant published source, was the meandering memoirs of the Cape Town socialist and sometime communist, Wilfrid Harrison.<sup>11</sup>

The books of Roux, Cope, and Harrison provide essential information for this proposed study, but part of data will come from a broad range of published and unpublished sources which are described and listed in the concluding bibliographical section of this volume. From these diverse sources, written or published not only in South Africa and the Soviet Union, but also in western Europe and the United States, this study will draw the bulk of information which will enable the researcher to describe the step-by-step process by which the left-wing internationalist socialist groups coalesced into the SACP in 1921, how the SACP moved in the 1920s to shift its focus from white labour to the emerging black working class, and the fashion by which the SACP ultimately accepted the authority of the Communist International in Moscow by 1932.

A number of publications, both scholarly and non-scholarly, have dealt directly with the ISL and the SACP in the 1914-1932 period. They have included additional accounts by participants, official histories published through the press of the South African Communist Party in London, studies by South African scholars, studies by a Russian historian, a lengthy anti-communist polemic, and an analysis co-authored by a South African activist and an English observer of African affairs.

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<sup>9</sup> .P. Baradat, *Political ideologies: their origins and impact*, p.18.

<sup>10</sup> R. K. Cope, *W.H. Andrews: A Biography*, p.88.

<sup>11</sup> J. Hoffman, *A glossary of political theory*, p. 122.

Of the post-1965 published works by participants in the SACP or organizations close to it, two are by South Africans (Edward Roux and Clements Kadalie) and one is by an American black (Harry Haywood). Edward Roux supplemented the accounts and analyses of his earlier books in memoirs, completed posthumously by his wife, Winifred, also a former member of the SACP.<sup>12</sup> The Roux memoirs, published in 1970, focused upon his own personal experiences and added hitherto unpublished details about his activities in the Young Communist League (and to a lesser extent, subsequently, in the SACP). In the same year Clement Kadalie's autobiography was also published.<sup>13</sup> With an interpretative introduction by Stanley Trapido, this work represented not an additional source for Kadalie's views upon his relationship with the SACP, and that of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU) which he headed, but merely the publication of a wellknown source.

In 1978 Harry Haywood, who had served on the Negro Commission of the Communist International in 1928 and was an early supporter of the slogan of an independent native South African republic, published his autobiography.<sup>14</sup> In a lengthy volume which focused upon his American experiences, but also included a number of chapters on his four and a half years in the Soviet Union, Haywood provided information beyond that which he had shared in a 1961 letter, particularly about his experiences with James La Guma and James Gumede when the two South Africans visited Moscow in 1927 and 1928.

South African communists in exile, publishing through the party press in London, also contributed three books to the list of post-1965 publications about the SACP and the ISL. Each of the books covered not only the 1914-1932 period, but also the post-1932 period, including the history of the successor South African Communist Party, constituted in 1953. In the first volume to appear, Michael Harmel, writing under the pseudonym of A. Lerumo, published a short history of the party upon the 50th anniversary of its founding.<sup>15</sup> Based upon a series of articles published in the party's journal, *The African Communist*, the book contained a general historical introduction followed by a condensed history of the party (of which approximately one-half was devoted to the period 1914-1932).

In addition, in appendices which were as lengthy as the text, the book contained 15 party documents (some of them excerpts), including the 1928 draft resolution of the Communist International proclaiming the slogan of an independent native South African republic. Without footnotes and detail, Harmel designed the volume as a popular history which he explicitly hoped would spur further research and discussion. In his discussion of the slogan of an independent native South African republic and the aftermath of its introduction he

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<sup>12</sup> B. Russel, *The practice and theory of Bolshevism*, pp.190-194.

<sup>13</sup> M. Legassick, 'The Past and Present Role of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC' in I. Liebenberg, et al (eds), *The Long March: The Story of the Struggle for Liberation in South Africa*, pp. 173-186.

<sup>14</sup> A. Heywood, *Politics*, p.221.

<sup>15</sup> A. Lerumo, *A Short History of the Communist Party of South Africa*, p.110.

strongly endorsed the general analysis made by the Communist International when it put forth the slogan.<sup>16</sup> He was equally as forthright in his condemnation of what he characterized as a dogmatic, sectarian tendency which manifested itself at the time in the Communist International and was transmitted to South Africa, subsequently leading to a harshly intolerant, ultra-left period...which cost the Party untold damage in membership and influence.

In 1975 Brian Bunting, editor of the party-oriented *Guardian* and its subsequent reincarnations until the final successor newspaper was banned in 1963, produced a biography of Moses Kotane, longtime general secretary of the party, in celebration of his 70th birthday.<sup>17</sup> Incorporating material from the party archives (much of which was not, however, carefully footnoted), as well as information gathered through correspondence and conversation with Kotane, Bunting's book offered its readers a sympathetic analysis of Kotane's participation in the party during the late 1920s and 1930s, revealing important details which had not been previously published. In more detail than Harmel's book (and explicitly critical of Roux's analysis) it discussed the introduction of the slogan of an independent native South African republic within the accepted position of the South African Communist Party, but it did not offer any new information about the debates of 1928-1930.<sup>18</sup>

In 1981, on the occasion of its 60th anniversary, the South African Communist Party published a book of selected party statements, making them easily accessible in one volume. Apparently designed as a non-scholarly reference work, the volume was comprised of documents drawn overwhelmingly from the party press and other publications, rather than from unpublished archival sources.<sup>19</sup> There were only very short introductions and connecting notes to explicate the documents.

Of the 136 documents, divided into four sections, 53 of the selections were from the period 1914-1932, including more documents from the 1928-1932 period than appeared in the Harmel volume. Yet there were only extremely brief excerpts from significant Communist International and SACP documents of 1930 and 1931 when S. P. Bunting and others who had originally opposed the slogan of an independent native South African republic were purged from the party and there were no previously unpublished documents from this period which could have provided invaluable new information.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Brian Bunting, *A Biography of Moses Kotane*, pp.12-94.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 60th anniversary, 1981, p.19.

The most recent semi-official party publication dealing with its history was a short popular history, published in 1990 in South Africa without any explicit publisher or date.<sup>20</sup> Reflecting the changing climate in South Africa in the wake of the unbanning of the party on February 11, 1990, the 64-page illustrated pamphlet-like volume, for which Brian Bunting was acknowledged as assisting in the research, presented a capsule history of the party in lively straight-forward language. Almost half of the pamphlet was devoted to the period 1914-1932.<sup>21</sup> Aside from a brief anecdote about the expulsion of a party member in the early 1930s it offered no new information. More than likely it was the harbinger of more extensive histories to be published in the 1990s under party auspices.

Unquestionably the most significant work focusing substantially upon the party and its predecessors published since 1965 was the massively detailed study of H.J. and R.E. Simons. In their book the Simons, a husband and wife team (he was an academic who had taught for decades at the University of Cape Town and she was a long-time trade union leader in the western Cape), chronicled and analyzed in detail the intertwined development of South African socialism and black resistance to white hegemony.<sup>22</sup> Central in their account were the SACP and the ISL. The book was based upon exhaustive research, particularly in contemporary newspapers, which had been completed before the authors, both deeply engaged members of the party since the 1930s, were forced into exile in the early 1960s.

The Simons explicitly called the book an exercise in political sociology rather than a history. They forthrightly stated that their narrative was interspersed with comments and value judgements.<sup>23</sup> In scope their work was analogous to Roux's *Time Longer Than Rope* which they utilized as a source and with which they often disagreed in interpretation. They also drew from Roux's first book, *S. P. Bunting: A Political Biography*, with which they also disagreed, particularly about the significance of the SACP's relationship with Moscow in the late 1920s and early 1930s.<sup>24</sup> In their coverage of the period 1914-1932 they utilized many of the same English-language South African printed sources which I intend using for this study.

In addition, they were able to draw upon unpublished documents (including letters written in the late 1920s) of James La Guma, the first SACP member to discuss the slogan of an independent native South African republic with the Communist International in Moscow and subsequently one of the first South Africans to support the slogan, as well as correspondence and conversations with his party ally of the time, Douglas Wolton.<sup>25</sup> They

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<sup>20</sup> A. Drew, (ed), *South Africa's Radical Tradition: A Documentary History*, Volume one: 1907-1950, pp.44-60.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> H.J. and R.E. Simons, *South African socialism and black resistance to white hegemony*, pp.99-108.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> S. P. Bunting: *A Political Biography*, pp.33-66.

<sup>25</sup> White, L. 'Telling More: Lies, Secrets, and History', *History and Theory*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (Dec, 2000), pp. 11-22.

also had access to the papers of Andrews whom they had known well during the latter part of his life when he re-joined the party and lived in Cape Town. Their study is as detailed as this research study. It agrees with it in outline and most details. It disagrees with it in some interpretations and value judgements, particularly in assessment of the role of the Communist International in the formulation of the slogan of an independent native South African republic and its aftermath within the SACP.<sup>26</sup>

Another younger exiled South African, Martin Legassick, published in 1973 the only analysis which focused upon the slogan of an independent native South African republic.<sup>27</sup> Exclusively utilizing published secondary sources, notably the Simons' book, Legassick did not provide any new information about how the slogan originated or its impact within the SACP during the period in question. He did, however, offer a Marxist-based critique of the slogan and its consequences for the SACP in which, like the Simons, he considered the relevance of the slogan's emphasis upon African nationalism and colonialism for the contemporary period.

More recently younger South African scholars conducting research within the country have published studies which have given new information about specific individuals or aspects of the 1914-1932 period. In 1989 Doreen Musson, a Cape Town-based researcher, published a biographical study of Johnny Gomas.<sup>28</sup> Gomas, a close associate of La Guma, and like him a Coloured, was a key party member in Cape Town from 1925 onward. Benefitting from access to Gomas' correspondence and writings, as well as interviews with family and friends, Musson used the means of a book which she characterized as a political biography to add new details to the published record about the SACP in Cape Town in the latter years of the 1914-1932 period.<sup>29</sup>

Two other researchers, in articles published in scholarly collections and journals, have thrown new light upon the role of Jewish radicals and Marxists during crucial periods in the history of the ISL and the SACP respectively. In a carefully focused study published in 1987, Evangelos Mantzaris analyzed the nature of the Yiddish-speaking branch of the ISL which was active from 1917-1920.<sup>30</sup> Utilizing police reports from the archives and drawing pertinently from specialized scholarship about the South African Jewish community, Mantzaris provided new information about the Johannesburg Jewish supporters of the ISL in the period immediately following the Bolshevik revolution.

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<sup>26</sup> S. P. Bunting: *A Political Biography*, pp.33-66.

<sup>27</sup> M. Legassick, *Towards socialist democracy*, p.98.

<sup>28</sup> D. Musson, *A biographical study of Johnny Gomas*, pp.10-99.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> D. Moore, *South Africa's depression, the national democratic revolution and the developmental state, a development studies perspective*. *Discourse*, 37(2):13-21.

In an earlier 1981 article, also fruitfully utilizing police and judicial archives, Mantzaris examined not only the significance of Jewish participation in the Industrial Socialist League of Cape Town during the same period, but more broadly the general nature of militant socialism in Cape Town prior to the formation of the SACP.<sup>31</sup> Taffy Adler provided analogous supplementary information, obtained primarily through interviews, in his sharply concentrated study of the Jewish Workers' Club, a vital source for party support and recruits in the late 1920s and early 1930s.<sup>32</sup>

The only other large-scale study matching that of the Simons in its exhaustive coverage was that of the Russian historian, Apollon Davidson. In 1969 he first published an article focusing directly on the founding of the SACP which subsequently, in slightly revised form, became a chapter of a much larger book which appeared in 1972.<sup>33</sup> Focusing upon a period of 54 years in his book, in contrast to the 100 year period of the Simons, Davidson similarly examined the emergence of both socialist and black opposition groups.

Davidson was thoroughly familiar with English-language secondary sources, including the Simons' book. (Of the other authors of post-1965 publications only Musson and Mantzaris appear also to have consulted some of the published articles drawn from it). Yet the major part of Davidson's research drew upon English-language primary sources, most notably the publications of the ISL and the early publications of the SACP, but also upon unpublished material from Soviet archives pertaining to South Africa and the Communist International.<sup>34</sup> Davidson provided a meticulously researched, step-by-step authoritative narrative which concurred generally with that of 1914-1924 period in which the two overlapped. There were also differences in interpretation.

In stark contrast to the systematic and scholarly approaches of Davidson, the younger South African scholars, and the Simons was the polemical approach taken by Henry Pike in his 1985 volume, the lone full-length history of communism in South Africa published within the tradition of rabid anti-communism.<sup>35</sup> The author, an American clergyman and a self-professed born-again, conservative Christian, was primarily concerned with the more recent period, but one-third of his book was devoted to the period through 1932.

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> T. Adler, *The Jewish Workers' Club*, pp.33-42.

<sup>33</sup> Davidson, A. B., *Komintern i Rozhdenie Pervoi Kompartii v Afrika* (The Comintern and the Birth of the First Communist Party in Africa) in Deliusin, L. P.; Persits, M. A.; Reznikov, A. B. and Ul'ianovskii, P. A. (eds.), *Komintern i Vostok* (The Comintern and the East) (Moscow: Glavnaia Redaktsiia Vostochnoi Literaturi, 1969), pp. 448-507; Davidson, A. B., *Iuzhnaia Afrika: Stanovlenie Sil Protesta 1870-1924* (South Africa: Growth of the Power of Protest 1870-1924) (Moscow: Glavnaia Redaktsiia Vostochnoi Literaturi, 1972).

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> H.P. Pike, *A History of Communism in South Africa*, p.132.

Utilizing materials from a vast range of published sources, both primary and secondary, as well as from interviews with Gerhard Ludi (a government spy who successfully penetrated the underground and exiled South African Communist Party in the 1960s) and Hendrik van den Bergh (the former head of the disbanded BOSS, the Bureau of State Security),<sup>36</sup> Pike dramatized through an unending stream of facts and commentary what he believed to be the machinations and dangers of Marxism and communism in South Africa, commencing with the arrival of Karl Marx's sister in Cape Town in 1853 and the subsequent publication (anonymously) of articles by Marx in the contemporary South African press and continuing through to alleged anti-Western American collaboration (including that of the CIA) with the Soviet Union in an international conspiracy against the Republic of South Africa.

His methods were completely unscholarly, his data was chosen selectively to conform to his anti-communist advocacy, and in his preface he unabashedly stated that the book does not purport to be a definitive, scientific analysis, but rather was intended primarily for purposes of instruction and education regarding the subject of communism in South Africa.<sup>37</sup> It contained a few new factual trivia items for the period through 1932, and numerous previously unpublished photo-graphs gleaned from South African archives, but there was no additional hitherto unavailable information to be culled from this anti-communist diatribe.

The most recent publication focusing upon the SACP was a closely argued collaboration between a black party member, writing under the pen name of Tsepo Sechaba, and Stephen Ellis, a white British journalist/academic.<sup>38</sup> As the title of the book suggested it was overwhelmingly concerned with the post-1960 period, but it did include a brief opening chapter upon the SACP. Its sources were published secondary sources; it contained no new information for the 1914-1932 period.

In addition to the post-1965 publications discussed above which have focused directly upon the SACP or ISL (with the exception of the Kadalie autobiography which focuses upon the ICU), there have also been other publications, both books and articles, which have considered the SACP in relation to other organizations, mostly the ICU or the African National Congress (ANC),<sup>39</sup> or in the context of particular local struggles.

Two earlier political histories, institutional studies of the ANC and the ICU, by Peter Walshe (an American-based academic) and P. L. Wickins (a South African academic) respectively, both discussed the nature of relationships with the SACP.<sup>40</sup> Both books were

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> H.P. Pike, *A History of Communism in South Africa*, pp.132-144.

<sup>38</sup> Stephen Ellis, *External Mission: The ANC in Exile, 1960–1990*, pp. 168-212.

<sup>39</sup> Stephen Ellis, "Nelson Mandela, the South African Communist Party and the origins of Umkhonto we Sizwe", *Cold War History* Vol. 16, Iss. 1, 2016

<sup>40</sup> P. Walshe, *The ANC and the ICU*, pp. 14-87; and P. L. Wickins, *The ANC and the SACP*, pp.33-64.

based upon systematic examination of available archival material and periodicals, but neither volume offered any new information about the SACP.

More recent publications from a younger generation of social historians, drawing effectively from diligent archival sleuthing in South Africa of police files, judicial and municipal records, supplemented by interviews with participants, have given new insight upon several dimensions of the SACP activities. F. A. Johnstone has amplified understanding of the fashion in which the ISL immediately after the First World War sought to engage African workers on the Witwatersrand in trade union activity.<sup>41</sup>

In analogous fashion Philip Bonner has elucidated the nature of the relationship of the ISL with the Transvaal Native Congress in the same period.<sup>42</sup> In her path breaking volume on rural mobilization by the ICU in the 1920s Helen Bradford also has suggestively offered new ways of thinking about the relationship between the ICU and the SACP.<sup>43</sup> New information about the fashion in which the SACP established itself in the Potchefstroom location at the end of the 1920s was contained in Julia Wells' study of locally-based women's activism.<sup>44</sup>

Outside of the stream of South African-oriented research published since 1965 there has been one important general study of Russian and Soviet links with Africa including the 1914-1932 period, a book published in 1974 by the American scholar, Edward Wilson, which included material relevant to a deeper appreciation of developments within the SACP.<sup>47</sup> Wilson's study, based upon a comprehensive examination of Russian-language primary sources of the Communist International and other Soviet organizations, as well as English-language and French-language sources, devoted little specific attention to South Africa, but it did present additional details about heightened Soviet attention to black Africa from 1928 onward, particularly through the International Trade Union Committee for Negro Workers which included South Africa within its mandate.

Unlike all of the post-1965 publications Wilson's study remains the only scholarly work which exclusively focuses upon the history of the ISL and that of the SACP during the first decade of its existence. None of the published scholarly work, neither major studies which covered all or significant parts of the 1914-1932 period in detail (Simons, Davidson) nor the more narrowly focused studies which considered only aspects of ISL or SACP history (Musson, Adler, Mantzaris) factually contradicted the narrative of Wilson's study.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> F. A. Johnstone, , in Ross R. et al (eds), *The Cambridge History of South Africa: Volume 2, 1885-1994*.

<sup>42</sup> P. Bonner, *The ISL and the Transvaal Native Congress*, pp.57-66.

<sup>43</sup> H. Bradford, *The ICU and the SACP*, pp. 12-55.

<sup>44</sup> J. Wells, *The SACP and women activism in Potchefstroom*, pp.14-31. <sup>47</sup>

E. Wilson, *Russian and Soviet links with Africa*, pp.34-59.

<sup>45</sup> Davidson, A. B., *Komintern i Rozhdenie Pervoi Kompartii v Afrika* (The Comintern and the Birth of the First Communist Party in Africa) in Deliusin, L. P.; Persits, M. A.; Reznikov, A. B. and Ul'ianovskii, P. A. (eds.), *Komintern*

Similarly, neither the publications of the South African Communist Party (Lerumo, Bunting, *South African Communists Speak*) nor the accounts of participants (Roux, Haywood) offered major new factual information.<sup>46</sup> From most of these sources came new details which add to overall knowledge of the period, yet Wilson's study is still the single source which has both the fullest narrative and the most information about the early history of the SACP and its immediate predecessor, the ISL.

Significant information, especially concerning the birth of the SACP and developments surrounding the slogan of an independent native South African republic, has been deciphered in this research study.

### 3. Problem Statement

It is a product of the revisionism within the SACP that followed the upheavals in the Soviet bloc and the Apartheid state in the period 1989 to 1993 that the Party should no longer be understood according to older Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy or the two-phase revolutionary theory (*National Democratic Revolution followed by a Socialist Democratic Revolution*) that sustained it during the exile period of 1950 to 1990.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, the Party's fusion with the ANC by means of common programmatic platforms, in 1955 and again in 1993/1994, has allowed it to neglect the development of its vision of a post-apartheid socialist transformation.

These factors resulted in the elimination of tangible benchmarks, missing in previous and current studies, according to which the Party could have measured progress towards socialism in the period after the South African democratic election of 1994. This also exacerbated the Party's inability, by itself, or as part of a Left vanguard, to engage effectively with the rightward shift that the post-apartheid democracy has taken since 1996.

Filling knowledge gap, this study argued that there was some scope for the SACP to engage with the global '*neo-liberal*' order and South Africa's essentially liberal democracy. This engagement might be based upon the Party's now secular political agenda and should be aimed at deepening South Africa's democracy. It is in this light that a study of The Role of the South African Communist Party (SACP) in the Struggle for Liberation in South Africa became important and was undertaken.

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i Vostok (The Comintern and the East) (Moscow: Glavnaia Redaktsiia Vostochnoi Literaturi, 1969), pp. 448-507; Davidson, A. B., *Iuzhnaia Afrika: Stanovlenie Sil Protesta 1870-1924* (South Africa: Growth of the Power of Protest 1870-1924) (Moscow: Glavnaia Redaktsiia Vostochnoi Literaturi, 1972).

<sup>46</sup> A. Heywood, *Politics*, p.233.

<sup>47</sup> H.P. Pike, *A History of Communism in South Africa*, pp.132-144.

#### **4. Aims and Objectives of the Study**

The study aimed at delving into the role played by the South African Communist Party in the Struggle for Liberation in South Africa. It also aimed at giving an exposition of the role it played in the National Democratic Revolution and Transition period in South Africa. Thus, this study had the following as its objectives:

- 4.1 Tracing the history and ideology of the South African Communist Party.
- 4.2 Interrogating the legitimacy of Marxism-Leninism as represented by the SACP.
- 4.3 Analysing the role and impact of the SACP in the National Democratic Revolution and Transition to democracy in South Africa.
- 4.4 Determining whether reviewing and re-organizing the SACP could successfully contribute to a socialist socio- economic dispensation in South Africa.
- 4.5 Evaluating the degree to which the current international political economy could permit the SACP to establish socialism in South Africa.

#### **5. Research questions**

- 5.1 What is the history and ideology of the SACP?
- 5.2 Is Marxism-Leninism as represented by the SACP still legitimate?
- 5.3 Why was/is the SACP central to the National Democratic Revolution and Transition to democracy in South Africa?
- 5.4 How could a review and re-organization of the SACP contribute to a socialist socio-economic dispensation in South Africa?
- 5.5 To what extent could the current international political economy allow the SACP to establish socialism in South Africa?

#### **6. Theoretical Framework**

##### ***Socialist Feminism***

Some of the earliest feminist thoughts were articulated by Mary Wollenstonecraft:

*“The preposterous distinctions of rank, which render civilization a curse, by dividing the world between voluptuous tyrants, and cunning envious dependants, corrupt, almost equally, every class of people, because respectability is not attached to the discharge of the relative duties of life, but to the station, and when the duties are not fulfilled the affections cannot gain sufficient strength to fortify the virtue of which they are the natural reward. Still there are some loopholes out of which a man may creep, and dare to think and act for himself; but for a woman it is a herculean task, because she has difficulties peculiar to her sex to overcome, which require almost superhuman powers.”*<sup>48</sup>

In this early writing (and this was done well before feminism became an organised movement) the beginning of a class association can be discerned. J.S. Mill also argued for the rights of women in the eighteen hundreds, yet it was not until Socialist Feminism as part of Socialism described women as the most exploited class (a description that will later echo in the National Democratic Revolution) that the liberation of women became part of the revolutionary agenda. Part of the understanding of a modern revolution is therefore that women must be liberated from capitalist exploitation and from subservience in a male dominant society. Because of this dual exploitation they are in a sense the most exploited class. Radical feminists with their “separate revolution” (whose tenets include the abolition of sex and lesbianism) do not have a mainstream tract in society.<sup>49</sup>

### ***Anarchism***

Anarchism dates back hundreds of years but truly came into existence at the same time as Marxism, in the era of the Enlightenment, witnessing the same exploitation of primitive capitalism. Anarchism thus agrees with Marxism that exploitative capitalism has to be destroyed.<sup>50</sup>

*“The anarchist then conceives a society in which all the mutual relations of its members are regulated, not by laws, not by authority, whether self-imposed or elected, but by mutual agreements between the members of that society...No ruling authorities, then, no government of man by man.”*<sup>54</sup>

Anarchism, although having a complex internal structure with various thinkers taking different roads, some of which move nearer to socialism while others move nearer to

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<sup>48</sup> M. Wollstonecraft, A vindication of the rights of women, pp.1759-1797.

<sup>49</sup> B. Goodwin, Using political ideas, pp.199-207.

<sup>50</sup> These works include inter alia; Che Guevara, On Guerrilla Warfare (1962); Frans Marek, Philosophy of world revolution (1969) and Lass H., Die Grondleggers van Revolusionêre Oorlogvoering (1976).<sup>54</sup> P.A. Kropotkin, Modern science and anarchism, p.45.

capitalism, tend to argue against all forms of rule, organisation and government, including the traditional tools of Marxism, namely the party and organised labour. Any large scale cooperation between mainstream anarchism and any revolutionary organisation is fundamentally very difficult.

### ***Socialism (and the Contribution of Marx)***

The term socialism was first used after the French Revolution. Karl Marx gave coherence and status to Socialism and brought the distinction between Scientific Socialism and Utopian Socialism. Out of Marxism (Scientific Socialism according to Engels) various variations grew. Engels was regarded as the word of orthodoxy after Marx's death; Trotsky, Stalin, Lenin, et cetera built on (perverted?) the Marxist tradition into other ideologies. Marx formulated laws and theories according to which socialism and communism, as an exalted form of socialism, would be inevitable after the demise of capitalism.

Frans Marek (1969:117) describes this inevitability:

*“Marx’s model, enriched and modified by Lenin’s theory of revolution and by the conclusions to be drawn from the antiimperialist revolutions in the colonial countries, can still be summed up in the idea ‘socialism follows capitalism just as capitalism followed feudalism... Marx and Engels took over from Hegel the conviction that history is not a collection of imaginary actions of imaginary men, nor a mass of bare facts, nor a meaningless succession of unconnected happenings...Marx and Engels founded this idea upon the law of motion of history by which they explain the succession of the various forms of society.’”<sup>51</sup>*

This dialectical process is driven by the conflict between classes (the oppressed and the oppressor) and the conflict can only be resolved by some form of revolution leading to the end of worldwide capitalism and imperialism. Important to note is that Marx was the first ideologue to formulate this idea of “worldwide” or constant revolution that would later echo in Trotsky's work.

### ***Communism***

“The Bolsheviks (Marxists under Lenin) have a very definite programme for achieving communism - a programme that has been set forth by Lenin.”<sup>52</sup> This programme revolved along the following lines: Lenin proposed a class (or the concept) of professional revolutionaries that should operate in secret and conspiratorially and create the desire for political change amongst the workers.

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<sup>51</sup> F.Marek, Socialism and contribution of Marx, p.125.

<sup>52</sup> B. Russel, The practice and theory of Bolshevism, p100.

*“First Workers are to form labour organizations and, if possible, Communist parties, operating openly, legally, and as publically as conditions allow. Side by side with such organizations there are to be small groups of professional revolutionaries, patterned after the army and the police, highly select and entirely secret...the organization of the professional revolutionaries must be highly disciplined and centralized...and must constantly supervise the communist led economic and political associations - the labour unions, the party and the rest.”*<sup>53</sup>

Lenin also advised the infiltration of all social, economic and political structures by these professional revolutionaries. The Communist party had to be centralised, and the masses had to be educated in a revolutionary manner.

It is worth noting that Lenin was dealing with a practical situation and that his was a particular solution to the Russian problem of that time.<sup>58</sup> Nonetheless, Bolshevism/Communism, especially Lenin’s understanding of the weak social cohesion and low organisational energy of undeveloped societies, has marked his programme as one of Russia’s great export successes and of which Lenin’s single most important contribution is:

*“...our primary and imperative practical task to establish an organization of revolutionaries capable of lending energy, stability, and continuity to the political struggle... in connection with organization, I mean professional revolutionaries, irrespective of whether they have developed from among students or working men. I assert: (1) that no revolutionary movement can endure without a stable organization of leaders maintaining continuity; (2) that the broader the popular mass drawn spontaneously into the struggle, which forms the basis of the movement and participates in it, the more urgent the need for such an organization, and the more solid this organization must be (for it is much easier for all sorts of demagogues to side-track the more backward sections of the masses); (3) that such an organization must consist chiefly of people professionally engaged in revolutionary activity; (4) that in an autocratic state, the more we confine the membership of such an organization to people who are professionally engaged in revolutionary activity and who have been professionally trained in the art of combating the political police, the more difficult will it be to unearth the organization; and (5) the greater will be the number of people from the working class and from the other social classes*

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<sup>53</sup> W. Ebenstein, Today’s ISMS, communism, fascism, capitalism, socialism, pp.29-30. <sup>58</sup> A.S. Cohan, Theories of revolution: an introduction, p. 90.

*who will be able to join the movement and perform active work in it..”<sup>54</sup>*

Lenin formulated the practical guide for the attainment (by various means) of communism (victory). (It seems it would no longer be a solely natural process as was claimed by Marx when he postulated the dialectic, but rather a process that can be/has to be engineered). Ultimately the centralised party incorporating all the various structures would be the vanguard formation for the revolution and also for the period thereafter, encompassing all social activities into party structures. This centrally controlled structure would then act against its ideological adversaries consisting of bourgeois ideologists and opportunists.

### ***Trotskyism***

According to Marek, Trotsky seized on the idea of the Permanent Revolution to fight against the ideal of true socialism.<sup>55</sup> Priestland describes that Trotsky did indeed come under attack from the far left of the Communist party for his more tolerant stance towards the bourgeoisie.<sup>56</sup> Trotsky himself asked

*“to close ranks, to establish discipline of labour and Socialist order, to increase the productivity of labour, and not to be baulked by any obstacle.”<sup>57</sup>*

This he aimed to achieve through the application of military methods throughout society as a whole in peacetime. He set demobilised soldiers to work on economic projects and took over the railways, seeking to apply top-down military organisation and discipline.<sup>63</sup>

His most important contribution however (and he also was dealing with the same practical situation as Lenin) was always the idea of the Permanent Revolution as defined at the beginning of this chapter, that is primarily a permanent/all-encompassing revolution, also on the international level without distinct stages. It is important to note that Trotsky did not want to skip stages in the revolution as his enemies claim, but rather due to his more tolerant view of the bourgeoisie as “*fellow travellers*”, he saw the two revolutions, the democratic and the proletarian, flowing into one. This one revolution will be constant on all societal levels until socialism is achieved not only in one state but in every state in the world.<sup>58</sup> Perhaps Trotsky foresaw that the inevitability of a communist “*victory*” predicted by Marx would not be so soon in coming? One state achieving Socialism would thus be only a minor event on the way towards the ultimate goal of International Socialism.

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<sup>54</sup> V.I. Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, p. 79.

<sup>55</sup> F. Marek, *Socialism and contribution of Marx*, p.82.

<sup>56</sup> D. Priestland, *The red flag: a history of communism*, 98.

<sup>57</sup> L. Trotsky, *The history of the Russian revolution to Brest-Litovsk*, p.153.

<sup>58</sup> M. Legassick, *Towards socialist democracy*, p. 80.

## *Stalinism*

In many ways Stalinism is the inverse of Trotskyism. Stalin believed in the two-stage theory of revolution, thus the first revolution is that of the bourgeoisie (a democratic revolution), followed by the socialist revolution. Stalin focused his version of Marxism inwards towards the USSR, and combined it with a feverish Nationalism, added militarism, peasant romanticism and a leadership cult; the result was “*socialism in one country*” (his slogan) with the USSR as the motherland, Eastern Europe as the satellites, Africa and Latin America as the client states (or the proxies) and the whole system with capitalism and the United States on the opposing-enemy side, becoming the Bipolar World Order.<sup>59</sup>

Trotskyites refer to this era under Stalin as neither socialist nor communist; just bureaucratic or “*Barracks communism*”, and to some degree this is true. The administration required to police the nationalistic programmes, the romantic notions of loyalty enshrined in everyday life and the various economic programmes led to communism by commission.

Stalin tried to turn the revolutionary political energy towards the economy and tried to “*industrialise*” on a massive scale, with disastrous results:

*“We are fifty to a hundred years behind the advanced countries. We must close the gap in ten years. Either we achieve this or they will do us in”.*<sup>66</sup>

To achieve this goal Stalin forsook the old bourgeoisie (real) science and relied on the new proletarian science with as cornerstone the belief that great revolutionary leaps are possible. Unfortunately for many, revolutionary zeal does not feed a population and mass death occurred especially in the Ukraine. This forced industrialisation was referred to as revolution from above.

## *Maoism*

*“Few Revolutionary movements anywhere in the world have succeeded so rapidly and none has achieved the magnitude of the Chinese Communist revolutionary mass movement”.*<sup>60</sup>

China had been in a state of continual turmoil since 1851 and out of this Mao Tse Tung (Mao Zedong) created “*a strategy and tactics*” for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) that sounded familiar and acceptable to his countrymen by writing in familiar Confucian style filled with traditional allegory and precedents from Chinese history. Mao’s great contribution was to bend Marxism to the particular situation, not the situation to Marxism.

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<sup>59</sup> D. Priestland, *The red flag: a history of communism*, pp.122-124. <sup>66</sup>

D. Priestland, *The red flag: a history of communism*, p.148.

<sup>60</sup> K.J. Cohen, & R.M. Cyert, *Strategy: formulation, implementation and monitoring*. *Journal of business*, 46(3):349367.

Mao for instance describes the goals of the revolution as

*“to change the objective world and, at the same time their own subjective world – to change their cognitive ability and change the relations between the subjective and objective world. Such a change has already occurred in one part of the globe, in the Soviet Union. There people are pushing forward this process of change. The people in China and the rest of the world either are going through a stage of change, who, in order to be changed, must go through a stage of compulsion before they can enter a stage of voluntary, conscious change. The epoch of world communism will be reached when all mankind voluntarily and consciously changes itself and the world.”*<sup>61</sup>

Even more than Russia, China was underdeveloped, even feudal, so Mao depended on the peasantry and formed a guerrilla army to conduct the revolution.

*“When we see the enemy, simply because he has a weapon in his hands, we must not be frightened to death like a rat who sees a cat...And if we do not fear death, then what is there to fear about the enemy? So when we see the enemy, whether he is many or few, we must act as though he is bread that can satisfy our hunger, and immediately swallow him... When it is not advantageous for our mainland army to meet the enemy in large-scale engagements and we therefore send out commando units or guerrilla units which employ the tactics of avoiding strength and striking at weakness, of flitting about and having no fixed position, and of subduing the enemy according to circumstances, and when we do not oppose the enemy according to the rules of tactics, this is called employing guerrilla tactics.”*<sup>62</sup>

Thus in a country where there was no working class, another class, in this case the rural peasants, became not only the revolutionary class but also the revolutionary army. A prime motivator for the peasant class was a new Chinese Nationalism, empowering them to see themselves as the equals and indeed as superior to their various oppressors and part of a socialist destiny. Another feature of Maoist thought is the Mass Line concept according to which:

*“the loyalty and continued vigour of the populace must be ensured again and again as the people are the central revolutionary motive force. As additional benefit through continued government regulated participation in the Mass Line it is insured that possible antagonisms*

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<sup>61</sup> M. Zedong, Collected writings of Chairman Mao, Volume 1: Politics and tactics. El Paso TX: El Paso Norte.p.38.

<sup>62</sup> M. Zedong, Collected writings of Chairman Mao, Volume 1: Politics and tactics. El Paso TX: El Paso Norte.p.4-5.

*towards the party, government and party officials will dissipate. Mass Line techniques include rallies, small group studies, campaigns of different sorts and self-reform.*"<sup>63</sup>

Another revolution in Asia occurred along Maoist lines. In Vietnam the Vietnamese revolutionaries were engaged in an all-out war against the French. Apart from adopting Mao's "new Democracy", an interesting aspect of this revolution was that the 1930-31 revolt had shown the Indochina Communist Party (ICP) the danger of alienating the wealthy peasantry and the landlords by prematurely emphasising class issues, and of alienating the peasantry generally by taking a dogmatic attitude towards traditional culture. The Viet Minh therefore was initially conceived as purely a national liberation movement. The ICP was at that stage officially dissolved, however in secret continuing to dominate.<sup>64</sup> The policies pursued at this stage were a campaign for literacy, universal elementary education and the recognition of the equality of nationalities and equality of the sexes.

The war in Vietnam as in China was primarily a guerrilla war. From his mountain redoubt General Vo Nguyen Giap organised a vast intelligence network along the lines prescribed by Mao Zedong, relying on peasant support.<sup>65</sup> Giap stated that his revolution was a national people's democratic revolution against feudalism and imperialism and just like the Chinese revolution had two dimensions: the ideological and the national; the revolution against feudalism representing the national frontier, with the revolution against imperialism representing the ideological frontier.<sup>73</sup>

Concerning the relationship between the armed and the political struggle:

*"Armed struggle has developed on the basis of political struggle brought to a higher level; these two forms of struggle developed simultaneously in a vigorous manner and stimulate each other. Armed struggle which becomes more and more vigorous does not make political struggle decrease in intensity but, on the contrary, gives it a stronger impulse; together they pursue the aim of annihilating and dislocating enemy armed forces, striking vigorously where the enemy is basically weak, on political ground".*<sup>66</sup>

The main contribution of the Vietnamese revolution was the Leninist (secret and conspiratorial) practicality with which the true role of the communist party, the implementation of Mao's principles and the singularity of purpose in the armed and

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<sup>63</sup> A.S. Cohan, Theories of revolution: an introduction, pp. 106-107.

<sup>64</sup> C.J. Christie, Ideology and revolution in Southeast Asia. Survey, pp. 94-95.

<sup>65</sup> C.J. Christie, Ideology and revolution in Southeast Asia. Survey, pp. 94-95. <sup>73</sup>

H.R. Lass, Die grondleggers van rewolusionêre oorlogvoering, p.139.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid; No mention of Vo Nguyen Giap and his revolution was made in Chapter 2 as the Vietnamese revolution does not represent a separate ideology. Giap's thinking however does represent a distinct contribution in revolutionary thinking.

political struggles were made obvious, to such a point that the one cannot exist without the other.

### ***Fidelismo***

The Cuban revolution's importance stems from various factors, not least of which is its virulent anti-colonialist, anti-imperialist and internationalist nature. These factors led to the defeat of Batista, the defeat of the United States in the Bay of Pigs fiasco, and the wholesale export of Fidel Castro's revolution especially to Latin America. The close relations between Cuba and Russia also proved to be a constant thorn in the side of the US.<sup>67</sup>

The revolution presented ideological problems for the Soviet Union as well. Soviet Ideology was burdened with formulas and dogmatism and scientists in the USSR were searching for ways of comprehending and explaining the evolution of the international system in general and the social and revolutionary processes in the Third World in particular. The study of Cuba was one way in which the Academy of Sciences of the USSR was looking at for enriching Marxism-Leninism.

The result of this process was the designation of Cuba as initially a Revolutionary Democratic State (this term would later be revised) and later a National Democratic State. These terms were never used before to describe a state, only the revolutionary movements of the colonial world. In the light of the Cuban example, a National Democratic State (this term will echo later in the National Democratic Revolution) did not require Communist leadership, yet was superior to all non-socialist states.<sup>68</sup> Cuba thus became the first Socialist State without a socialist party in control; that was of course because Castro was not an outspoken socialist at first, just fiercely nationalist. (This point can also be made about the ANC, which is firstly a nationalist party.)

An important factor and influence in the broader aspect of Fidelismo was the thinking of Che Guevara. He was a socialist and a Stalinist and, with a greater tolerance for violent action than Castro, he was also a guerrilla fighter and strategist. According to Guevara,

*“the guerrilla is a crusader for the people's freedom who, after exhausting peaceful means, resorts to armed rebellion. He aims directly at destroying an unjust social order and indirectly at replacing it with something new.”*<sup>69</sup>

Yet these guerrilla soldiers are only the armed centre of the masses themselves. The army is thus dependent on the broad support of the people.

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<sup>67</sup> J. Lévesque, *The USSR and the Cuban revolution: Soviet ideological and strategical perspectives, 1959–1977*, p.iv.

<sup>68</sup> J. Lévesque, *The USSR and the Cuban revolution: Soviet ideological and strategical perspectives, 1959–1977*, pp.4855.

<sup>69</sup> C. Guevara, *On guerrilla warfare*, p.30.

Guevara likened the guerrilla to a crusader but in order to attain this “*status*” he had to

*“display impeccable moral conduct and self-control. He must be an ascetic. At first he will not stress social reform, acting more as a big brother to the poor farmer...He bothers the rich as little as possible. Then, little by little, the issues sharpen, people are forced to take sides, and conflict breaks out. At this point the guerrilla emerges as the people’s standard bearer, justly punishing any betrayal of the cause, taking from the rich, and giving to the poor...the guerrilla provides ideology for social reform by personal example...guerrilla leaders are not men bowed down by daily farm labour...they personally set the example of armed rebellion.”*<sup>70</sup>

In various books Guevara continues to give practical instruction in guerrilla warfare in a similar vein as “*Combat is the climax of guerrilla life*” and in greater detail up to the conduct of ambushes and the structuring and organisation of guerrilla organisations. He based his thoughts upon three fundamental principles:

- Popular forces can win against an army.
- One does not necessarily have to wait for a revolutionary situation to arise, it can be created.
- In the underdeveloped countries of the Americas, rural areas are the best battlefields for revolution.<sup>71</sup>

Guevara influenced Castro and in 1962 Castro publicly announced the socialist nature of the Cuban revolution, denounced his enemy Annibal Escalante as sectarian and dogmatic and proclaimed himself a socialist. Castro also built a substantial cult around his own person, which he had little trouble in achieving because of his unrivalled popularity as the liberator of Cuba and the victor in the Bay of Pigs affair.<sup>72</sup>

He was also popular throughout the wider Latin America. On the whole Cubans had the sense that Cuba belonged to them, and while the Soviet Union provided monetary and other aid, life in Cuba was better than in other Latin American countries.

### ***Reactionism***

Reactionist ideologies are usually on the right side of the political spectrum, but can also denote opposition to Marxist ideology. During the Russian civil war the White Russians

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<sup>70</sup> C. Guevara, On guerrilla warfare, pp.30-32.

<sup>71</sup> C. Guevara, On guerrilla warfare, pp.30-32.

<sup>72</sup> J. Lévesque, The USSR and the Cuban revolution: Soviet ideological and strategical perspectives, 1959–1977, pp.5463; The political elimination of Escalante and the socialization of the Cuban revolution formed an interplay in the complex Sino-Soviet conflict at that time, with Escalante getting support from China.

who fought against the Bolsheviks were called reactionary. The term in the Marxist idiom thus has a pejorative connotation relating to feudalism, capitalism and nationalism. Reactionist governments usually are authoritarian, nationalistic and anti-Marxist, thus any non-Marxist might be labelled a reactionary by a Marxist.<sup>73</sup> This is not correct as a reactionary holds not only anti-Marxist views but wishes a return to the status quo ante as he or she defines it.

The reason for the inclusion of this collection of ideologies in this thesis is the fact that most reactionaries prefer violent revolutionary action to gain their objective. Some anarchists are reactionary, thus there is a wide overlap in motivation for the primary method that remains revolution – of some kind. The Fascist regime of Mussolini with his wish to return Italy to the magnificence of Rome can be regarded as a prime example of reactionism. Some also regard National Socialism (Nazism) as reactionary. More positive and more contemporary examples of reactionism are the various Skinhead and Neo Nazi movements in Europe and America.<sup>82</sup> A prime example of this is the excerpt from the 25 points of the National Socialist Movement of America:

*“We demand the union of all Whites into a greater America on the basis of the right of national self-determination. We demand equality of rights for the American people in its dealings with other nations, and the revocation of the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the World Bank, the North American Free Trade Agreement, the World Trade Organization, and the International Monetary Fund. We demand land and territory (colonies) to feed our people and to settle surplus population. Only members of the nation may be citizens of the state. Only those of pure White blood, whatever their creed, may be members of the nation.”<sup>74</sup>*

This way of thinking described in the quotation above is easy to relegate to the realm of the impossible, but a single man driving a truck loaded with a homemade bomb, armed with primarily a conviction that his beliefs were worth the lives of many, inflicted huge damage in Oklahoma City on 19 April 1995.<sup>75</sup> This is what makes a reactionist ideology dangerous, a propensity for violence and revolution, where the revolutionary in the words of Guevara does not have to be part of an army; he has to be a crusader, even a single one.

In conclusion the goal of the section above was to elaborate and compare the contributions of various thinkers and practitioners within the radical ideologies as to their theoretical and practical understanding (theoretical/practical proposition) of revolution.

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<sup>73</sup> T.H. Greene, *Comparative revolutionary movements: search for theory and justice*, p.112. <sup>82</sup>

L.P. Baradat, *Political ideologies: their origins and impact*, p.29.

<sup>74</sup> NSM (National Socialist Movement of America). 1974. 25 point party thesis.

<sup>75</sup> K. Newton, & J.W. Van Deth, *Foundations of comparative politics: democracies of the modern world*, p.95.

## 7. Research Methodology

Research methodology is a reflection of the entire approach for the research process. It is a strategy employed by the researcher to obtain answers to the research questions.<sup>76</sup> It is a procedural plan adopted by the researcher to provide valid objective and accurate answers to research questions and it entails data collection techniques and analysis.

This study has employed a combination of qualitative and quantitative approach through survey and qualitative content analysis research design. Qualitative research methodology is guided by a process which includes field notes, interviews, photographs and recordings.<sup>77</sup> The reliance on this method is because qualitative research methods allow the researcher to collect data in a natural setting and therefore provide the researcher with an insight into the phenomenon of interest. Qualitative research method allows the researcher to interpret events in terms of the meaning that respondents give to them and researchers are able to examine issues based on their natural setting.

Bertram and Christiansen state that qualitative research method is important because it gives rich information, in addition to the fact that this method is so comprehensive that it helps the researcher to develop a full understanding of the information being investigated.<sup>78</sup> The qualitative research method has assisted the researcher in getting in-depth information on how the South African Communist Party (SACP) emerged and what role it played in the National Democratic Revolution in South Africa. This research method made it easier to understand how transition to democracy was arrived at. The views of the people were of high importance in this study as far as the reviewing and reorganizing the SACP.

Quantitative research is perceived to be objective in nature and involves examining and measuring the phenomena being studied. It involves the collection and analysis of numerical data and the application of statistical tests).<sup>79</sup> Quantitative research is more focused and aims to test assumptions, whilst qualitative research is more exploratory in nature. Quantitative data is of the kind that may lead to measurement or other kinds of analysis involving applied mathematics, while qualitative data cannot always be put into a context that can be graphed or displayed as a mathematical term.<sup>80</sup> The quantitative research design used in this study generated important information from the target samples.

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<sup>76</sup> C. Bertram and I. Christiansen, *Understanding Research: an introduction to reading research*, pp.71-73.

<sup>77</sup> B. Lincoln, *Theorizing myth: narrative, ideology and scholarship*, p.202.

<sup>78</sup> C. Bertram and I. Christiansen, *Understanding Research: an introduction to reading research*, p.115.

<sup>79</sup> S. Strauss, & R.G. Corbin, 1998. *Basic Qualitative Research Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. Sage. Thousand Oaks, p.40.

<sup>80</sup> <http://www.polity.org.za>

## 7.1 Data Collection and Analysis

Hesser-Biber argues that data collecting instruments or methods are integral elements of the research design. There are several methods available in the research field, each with its own advantages and disadvantages.<sup>81</sup>

This study drew its data from primary and secondary sources. The primary sources included interviews, SACP Central Committee documents, journal articles that contain the research findings, focus groups etc. the study also used the leadership of the SACP, oral interviews gave the researcher the opportunity to get answers to questions which might never have been answered in the past thus opening new area of study. Formal interviews were conducted on card-carrying members of the SACP, as the study sought to also find out what role could be played by these cadres in reviewing and reorganizing the SACP. Open ended questions were asked for participants to answer freely and be flexible in answering questions so that more information could be gathered on the subject matter. Focus groups of 5-10 people from the SACP structures across South Africa were interviewed and questionnaires provided to give the respondents a chance to answer questions and give more insight on the *modus operandi* of the SACP and its role in the National Democratic Revolution (NDR).

The secondary sources included books, journal articles which did not provide original research work. The researcher also used desktop inquiry. Desk-top research consisted of examination of existing literature, to help situate one's study within the context of existing evidence. This involved collecting secondary evidences which assisted the researcher in the study and finding supporting evidence from existing literature.

## 7.2 Target Population

A population is a group of individuals who have the same characteristics.<sup>82</sup> According to Babbie,

*“a population is that aggregation of elements from which the sample is actually selected. It is further explained as that group of people the researcher wants to draw conclusions”.*<sup>83</sup>

In this study the target population were *academics* and politicians in South Africa. These politicians and academics were divided into SACP leadership, card-carrying members and academic historians and authorities in political science and international relations at universities. These politicians and academics were solicited throughout the country. The

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<sup>81</sup> Sharlene Nagy Hesser-Biber, *Mixed Methods Research: Merging Theory with Practice*, pp.63-65.

<sup>82</sup> J.W. Creswell, *Handbook of research design and social measurement*, pp.143-200.

<sup>83</sup> E. Babbie, & J. Mouton, *The practice of social research*, p.92.

researcher, however, chose KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, Gauteng, the Eastern Cape and Limpopo Provinces so that he could be able to generalize his study.

### 7.3 Sample and Sampling Procedures

This study employed the purposive non-probability sampling technique to select participants (academics and politicians) in the study. According to Kumar,

*“In purposive sampling the researcher select people or sites that can best help to understand the phenomenon. The inclusion of the participants will be based on the capacity of the participant to inform the research.”*<sup>84</sup>

The sample size entailed 300 academics and politicians, comprising 250 natives (South Africans) and the other 50 were divided amongst the non-South Africans (black Africans, Russians, Chinese and Cubans) residing in the five (5) provinces. The main reason why the Sample size was in this way was simply to get more and varied/diverse information or people’s perceptions on the advent, the role of the South African Communist Party in the National Democratic Revolution and in Transition to democracy in South Africa.

To add value to the data a group of experts were interviewed, this assisted the researcher to gain more understanding and it gave more insight on the study because these people had the necessary knowledge concerning the South African Communist Party. Two of the proposed interviewees were senior researchers at the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA), the people interviewed included lectures in the department of political Science and international relations from Universities of KwaZulu Natal (PMB Campus); Zululand; Wits; Northwest and UNISA. The above mentioned all were experts and had in depth knowledge on the SACP. Officials from the SACP branch offices were interviewed as to get more insight on the nature and operations of the SACP.

Semi structured interviews were conducted; the reason for these interviews was simply to provide validity for the study. The questions were open ended questions which could not be answered with a mere yes or no answer, these questions assisted the researcher to get a greater variety of answers among those interviewed. In depth responses along with explanations and descriptions led to acquiring much more needed information on the study.

The importance of conducting this qualitative research is that each expert who had worked in the field was able to provide analysis on the fieldwork that they had done in their individual research experience. The data collection method was premised on the fact that the interviewees were considered experts in this particular field. The data was analysed using content analysis and the representation of the findings was also represented in forms

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<sup>84</sup> R. Kumar, Research Methodology: a step-by-step guide for beginners, pp.234-245.

of graphs and tables to explain the results (see attached annexure on the Analytical Dimension of the NDR).

#### **7.4 Data analysis and interpretation**

Data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcript, field notes and other material that can be accumulated to increase understanding and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others.<sup>85</sup> The transcribed data was analysed by means of content thematic analysis and aided by thematic network analyses. Content thematic analysis was a flexible tool that involved the identifying of themes or patterns within data.<sup>86</sup> Themes were defined as recurrent unifying concepts or statements about the subject of inquiry.<sup>87</sup> According to Somekh and Lewin, content thematic analyses can be successfully aided by and presented as thematic networks, which refer to web-like illustrations that summarise the basic, organising and global themes constituting a piece of text.<sup>97</sup> Therefore, the researcher did read through the transcripts several times in order to understand the content of the transcripts and then sorted the information by themes.

#### **8. Conclusion**

This study intended to contribute to the literature on the backdrop of a limited past studies on the role of the SACP in the struggle for liberation in South Africa. It also sought to contribute to the academic synergy of key priorities and common focus areas of the South African Communist Party policies, interpretations and implementation requirements thereof from national to provincial and eventually to local government where it impacted on the lives of the people. The study has further contributed to reviewing and reorganizing the SACP with a view to playing a meaningful role in its future vanguard mission of a Socialist Democratic Revolution (SDR).

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<sup>85</sup> J.W. Creswell, Handbook of research design and social measurement, pp.143-200.

<sup>86</sup> J. Brewer, and A. Hunter, Foundations of Multimethod Research: synthesising styles, p.231.

<sup>87</sup> M. Bradburn, N.S. Sudman, Improving Interview Method and Questionnaire Design, pp.168-207. <sup>97</sup>

B. Somekh & C. Lewin (Eds), Research Methods in the Social Sciences, pp.102-118.

## CHAPTER TWO:

### THE SACP IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

#### 2.1 Introduction

The Communist Party of South Africa was founded in 1921, marking the beginning of the country's communist history (CPSA). The party, like the majority of organized labour—its main constituency—was largely white. The CPSA attempted to fight for equal pay for black and white workers, but white labour refused to desegregate, and African-American support for the party was practically non-existent. The CPSA received instructions from the Communist International (Comintern) in 1928 to work for a "independent native republic."<sup>88</sup> This phrase helped the party gain black members, but it also caused a lot of internal strife.

The CPSA's position grew stronger throughout WWII, but the party was outlawed in 1950 when Afrikaner nationalists took power. It resurfaced as the underground South African Communist Party in 1953. (SACP). Since then, the African National Congress and the party have collaborated closely (ANC). Many of its leaders were also members of the African National Congress (ANC). The Freedom Charter, the ANC's overall agenda, was drafted with the cooperation of communists in 1955. The SACP began the armed campaign against apartheid in 1960.<sup>89</sup> In 1963, the ANC took the fledgling liberation army under its wing. Many members of the party, including Nelson Mandela, were incarcerated or sent into exile in the early 1960s.

The party had a significant ideological impact on the ANC, with its concepts on South Africa as a peculiar form of colony and the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) becoming part of all ANC policies as early as 1969. Following the end of apartheid, communists had key positions in all of the ANC's cabinets. Despite this, many SACP members are dissatisfied with the ANC's current course. The party, on the other hand, has not run for office on its own, preferring to influence ANC policies from within. Its reputation as a fierce revolutionary party has suffered as a result of this.

#### 2.2 The Communist Party of South Africa Is Born

On July 30, 1921, fourteen delegates in Cape Town formed the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA).<sup>90</sup> Decades of debate among South Africa's left on questions of race and class, as well as the character of the struggle for workers' rights, preceded this event. Finding common ground was made more difficult by the fact that the working class was

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<sup>88</sup> Apollon Davidson et al., eds., *South Africa and the Communist International: A Documentary History, Vol. I: Socialist Pilgrims to Bolshevik Fightsoldiers, 1919–1930* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 80; and Harold Jack Simons and Ray Simons, *Class and Colour in South Africa, 1850–1950* (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin, 1969), 261.

<sup>89</sup> Simons and Simons, *Class and Colour*, 180, 184.

<sup>90</sup> Apollon Davidson, *Yuzhnaia Afrika: stanovleniie sil protesta* (Moscow: Nauka, 1972), 346.

racially and ethnically divided. The party's origins can be traced back to disagreements over the colour bar within the white South African Labour Party (SALP). The Labour Party divided in 1915 over whether or not to support the South African government's war effort. Several Labour leaders have called on the workers of the warring countries to join forces in the name of peace.

Bill Andrews, David Ivon Jones, Sydney Percival Bunting, and Colin Wade broke away from the SALP in September 1915 to found the International Socialist League of South Africa (ISL).<sup>91</sup> Radical socialists ruled the league.

Jones, the editor of the International, noted that without complete rights to the film:

*“native working class” internationalism could only be a scam. “We can hope to liberate the whites,” it continued, “only after we liberate the natives.”*<sup>92</sup>

Despite this, the ISL did not follow through on its stated principles. As a result, it supported a strike by white municipal workers, despite the fact that they pledged to aid authorities in combating the "native menace"—a demonstration organized by the African National Congress (ANC) against the passes that Africans were required to carry.<sup>93</sup>

South African socialists were greatly influenced by Russia's Bolshevik revolution in 1917. Lenin's publications and information regarding the revolution and the Bolshevik party were published by the ISL. The print run of the International was at its peak in 1918, with 2,500 copies printed.<sup>94</sup> In South Africa's major cities, several other socialist and Marxist organizations arose. The vast majority of them desired to become members of the Communist International (Comintern). Jones was co-opted to the Comintern's Executive Committee together with another leaguer, Sam Barlin, at the Comintern's 3rd Congress (ECCI). However, the Comintern's admittance criteria stipulated that each country could only have one united national communist party, therefore none of South Africa's socialist organizations were accepted.<sup>95</sup>

In July and August of 1921, the first Party Congress was held. The United Communist Party (Cape Town), the Marxian Club (Durban), the ISL, and the Jewish Socialist Society, or

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<sup>91</sup> Simons and Simons, *Class and Colour*, 222–223.

<sup>92</sup> Irina Filatova and Apollon Davidson, *The Hidden Thread: Russia and South Africa in the Soviet Era* (Cape Town: Jonathan Ball, 2013), 43–44.

<sup>93</sup> Filatova and Davidson, *The Hidden Thread*, 83.

<sup>94</sup> Davidson et al., *South Africa*, 80–84.

<sup>95</sup> Sheridan Johns, *Rising the Red Flag: The International Socialist League and the Communist Party of South Africa* (Belville, Cape Town: Mayibuye Books, UWC, 1995), 128–139; Simons and Simons, *Class and Colour*, 271–299; and Davidson et al., *South Africa*, 94–99.

Poalei Zion, were the founding groups (Johannesburg). The International became the new party's official organ. Andrews, Bunting, and C.B. were among its office bearers.

Tyler, "How best to organize and perform propaganda among native and coloured employees," was the subject that sparked the most debate.,"<sup>96</sup> despite this, the whole leadership was white. The party condemned racism, but considered the white working class as the revolution's torchbearer.

### 2.3 The “Red Revolt” and the Turn to the “Black Masses”

This conflicting strategy was about to be put to the test. In 1921, mining companies in the Witwatersrand tried to soften the colour line in order to use black labourers instead of whites for some low-level tasks. Thousands of white miners went on strike in January 1922, which turned into an open rebellion under the red flag and socialist revolution slogans. Communists were at the forefront, encouraging strikers to take more aggressive action while also trying to persuade them not to defend the colour bar. This was in vain. Under the banner "Workers of the World Fight and Unite for a White South Africa," the strikers demonstrated. Attacks on black workers occurred, which communists attempted but failed to prevent. Despite this, they backed the rebellion against the dictatorship.<sup>97</sup>

The strike drew the South African Labour Party (SALP) and the National Party closer together, yet even in 1923, the communist leadership maintained their alliance despite resistance from the African Peoples' Association in the Cape, the only non-white group with any voting strength. Only the Pact administration, by defending poor whites against the "black threat," was able to dispel communist misconceptions about the nature of South Africa's white working class. The Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) annual convention in December 1924 adopted a resolution "*to take the message of communism to the downtrodden working class and develop the mass basis among the Africans.*"

Spreading the party's word among the black masses took several forms. One was promoting non-whites to leadership positions (T.W. Thibedi, G. Makabeni, E.J. Khaile, J. Gomas, J. La Guma, and others). Communist education and propaganda featured prominently, as did work in and with black organizations.<sup>98</sup>

In March 1927, James La Guma reported to the Communist International (Comintern) that the party had "125 members in the black organization."<sup>99</sup> and the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union [ICU]." "We have formulated a policy for these members," he went on, "that they must push inside these organisations which they do to the best of

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<sup>96</sup> Simons and Simons, *Class and Colour*, 311, 313–317, 325–327; and Davidson et al., *South Africa*, 101.

<sup>97</sup> Davidson et al., *South Africa*, 139–142. <sup>108</sup>

Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Davidson et al., *South Africa*, 153–154.

<sup>99</sup> Simons and Simons, *Class and Colour*, 353–358.

their ability.”<sup>100</sup> But in 1926, Clements Kadalie—the ICU’s general secretary, who had long called on members of his union to overthrow capitalism—changed tack and denounced communists as “puppets of the Party.”

The council resolved that no office bearer of the ICU could be a member of the Communist Party, and three of them, La Guma, Khaile, and Gomas, were expelled.<sup>101</sup> Two factors influenced this change. One was Kadalie’s defensive reaction to the increased government pressure on him as a result of the “political” nature of his activities; the other, the influence of the British social democratic movement, whose representative he met earlier that year.<sup>102</sup>

The African National Congress (ANC) had tumultuous relations as well. Africans had been cautioned about bolshevism by Josiah Gumede, secretary of the Natal Native Congress. However, in 1927, addressing the Congress of the League against Imperialism in Brussels, he said: “*I am glad that in South Africa there are Communists ... we find that the CPSA are the only people who are with us in spirit.*” In June he was elected president-general of the ANC, and then visited Moscow to attend the World Congress of the Friends of the Soviet Union (FSU). After his return he advocated a closer alliance with the CPSA. The majority of the ANC leadership did not go along with this, and in April 1930 Gumede was replaced.<sup>103</sup>

The party in Cape Town organized a school for illiterate blacks, and there was another school in Ferreirastown in Johannesburg, which by 1928 had eighty regular students. Communists also helped to organize non-white trade unions and occupied key positions in them. La Guma estimated that in 1927 the party had 400 members, only 100 of whom were “Negroes,” though H.J. Simons and R. Simons claimed that in 1928 party membership stood at 1,750, 1,600 of whom were “African,” and that in 1929, it was nearly 3,000, the majority of them black.<sup>115</sup>

## 2.4 The Comintern, the CPSA, and the “Independent Native Republic”

Until 1928, the Communist International (Comintern) did not intervene in affairs of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA). Bunting and Andrews were delegates at the 4th Congress of the Comintern in 1922, at which Andrews was elected to the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI). Bunting, his wife, Rebecca (also a founding member of the CPSA), and Edward Roux attended the 6th Congress in 1928. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, fourteen South Africans, black and white, studied in Comintern schools. Albert Nzula (the party’s first black secretary), Edwin Mofutsanyana,

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<sup>100</sup> Sylvia Neame, *The Congress Movement: The Unfolding of the Congress Alliance, 1912–1961*, Vol. 2, April 1926– 1928 (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2015), 59–60.

<sup>101</sup> Filatova and Davidson, *The Hidden Thread*, 149–152; and Simons and Simons, *Class and Colour*, 217, 403.

<sup>102</sup> Davidson et al., *South Africa*, 153–154; and Simons and Simons, *Class and Colour*, 376, 406.

<sup>103</sup> Davidson et al., *South Africa*, 5–6. <sup>115</sup>

ibid.

and Gomas served on the editorial board of the *Negro Worker*, one of the Comintern's publications.<sup>104</sup>

The situation changed in late 1927, after the visit of La Guma, the first non-white party member to go to Moscow. On March 16, he presented a report on the South African situation to a meeting of ECCI's presidium. In response, Nikolai Bukharin, head of the Comintern, proposed a new policy for the CPSA, based on the slogan of "a Negro republic independent of the British Empire" with "autonomy for national white minorities." The slogan of "independent Native republic" was adopted by the ECCI, confirmed by the 6th Congress of the Comintern, and then imposed on the party.<sup>105</sup> From then on, the ECCI took the CPSA under its direct and constant control.

The new policy did not go down well with South African communists. The majority, both black and white, wanted more clarity. If the native republic was to be a bourgeois state, there was no reason for the proletariat to fight for it. If it were to be socialist, it should be achieved through class, not race, action. Bunting took these doubts to the Comintern's 6th Congress, but to no avail.<sup>106</sup>

The "Native republic" slogan was aimed at increasing the CPSA's black membership—which it partly achieved. Boris Idelson, the first Comintern emissary to arrive in South Africa in 1929, rejoiced: "In Potchefstroom ... over 1500 Negroes, almost all of them agricultural labourers, joined the Party at once." Even he, however, had to admit that these new cadres were not "real Party members."<sup>119</sup> The party that emerged from this process was much darker in complexion, but also more dependent on the Comintern, more dogmatic, divided, and sectarian.

In 1930 the Comintern's campaign of "bolshevization" reached South Africa. Its purpose was to purge older and more independent cadres and thus to assert the ECCI's undisputed authority. Douglas Wolton, a British communist, was sent to South Africa for this purpose. He and his allies (Nzula, Roux, and Moses Kotane among them) succeeded in expelling Bunting and Andrews on accusations of "white chauvinism" and "Trotskyism." Thibedi and Makabeni soon followed, accused of "Buntingism." Both factions labeled one another as either "left sectarians" or "right deviationists." In 1934 and 1935, both tried to expel one another from the party, while appealing to the Comintern for intervention. The party had only a few dozen members left and its day-to-day work ceased.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Davidson et al., *South Africa*, 13, 177–180 et al.

<sup>105</sup> Davidson et al., *South Africa*, 14–15, 214. Five such emissaries visited South Africa in the late 1920s and 1930s, and one worked in the country permanently in an official capacity, simultaneously doing underground work.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, <sup>119</sup>

*Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> Simons and Simons, *Class and Colour*, 511–512; and Ray Alexander-Simons, *All My Life and All My Strength*, ed. Raymond Suttner (Johannesburg: STE Publishers, 2004), 63–99, 123–136 et al.

The Comintern's 7th Congress, held in 1935, called on communists to work with all antifascist forces. The slogan of an "independent Native republic" was scrapped, and the ECCI appointed a commission to look into the CPSA's affairs. The commission worked for more than two years and collected thousands of documents. Its recommendations, however, were even further removed from South African reality, including the "confiscation without compensation" of the land of large farmers and the provision of full employment and "social insurance" for the whole population. On a more practical note, squabbling about theory was to stop and the party was to concentrate on trade union work.<sup>108</sup>

The commission was the Comintern's swan song in South Africa. By the late 1930s, the majority of the Comintern's leaders, including everybody who dealt with the CPSA, had perished in Stalin's Gulag. At least six South African communists (L. Bach, M. Richter, P. Richter, J. Glazer, S.B. Davidov, and S.G. Davidov) died there too.<sup>109</sup>

## 2.5 The United Front, the Nazi-Soviet Pact, and the War Effort

The Comintern's call for trade union work fell on fertile soil. The year 1938 saw the emergence of the Council of Non-European Trade Unions, in which several top positions were occupied by communists. In Cape Town, Andrews, Kotane, La Guma, Gomas, Ray Alexander, and other communists organized and radicalized both white and coloured workers.<sup>110</sup>

But events in Europe divided the party along colour lines again. African members were more interested in their daily needs than in developments on another continent, so, in search of united front allies, the party appealed to white labour. At the 1938 national conference of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), general secretary Mofutsanyana suggested dividing the party into African and non-African sections, but this motion was rejected. By then Cape Town had become the center of communist activities. Kotane, Roux, and Andrews (who re-joined the party in 1938) moved there; the *Guardian*, a radical weekly, was started there; and trade unions of both white and non-white workers flourished. On Kotane's suggestion, party headquarters were moved to Cape Town. A new politburo was elected, consisting of Andrews, Alexander, Sam Kahn, Zainunnissa Gool, Kotane, and Jack Simons. The party center remained in Cape Town until 1950.<sup>111</sup>

Meanwhile, communists continued their work in non-white organizations. Mofutsanyana and Marks helped to revive the African National Congress (ANC) in the Transvaal, with Marks becoming its secretary. In 1935, communists participated in an All-African

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<sup>108</sup> Davidson et al., *South Africa*, 13–15.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid Davidson et al., *South Africa*, 16–17.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., *South Africa*, 18–20.

<sup>111</sup> Simons and Simons, *Class and Colour*, 511–512; and Ray Alexander-Simons, *All My Life and All My Strength*, ed. Raymond Suttner (Johannesburg: STE Publishers, 2004), 63–99, 123–136 et al.

Convention against the disfranchisement of Africans in the Cape, convened by the ANC. In Cape Town, communists were part of the National Liberation League, formed by coloured radicals. In 1939, communists, Trotskyists, and representatives of other left organizations convened a Non-European United Front Conference in Cape Town, which passed a resolution against segregation and for full equality.<sup>112</sup>

The CPSA saw the coming war in Europe as “imperialist” and denounced both sides. For communists, the safety of the U.S.S.R. was the highest priority, so the party defended not only the Nazi-Soviet Pact, but also the Soviet invasion of Finland and Poland, and its occupation of the Baltic states as steps to secure Soviet borders.<sup>113</sup> Despite its deep distaste for Nazism, the CPSA found itself in the same camp as the Ossewabrandwag and Greyshirts, who also opposed the government’s war efforts. Party membership dwindled.

Hitler’s invasion of the U.S.S.R. changed the CPSA’s policy overnight. The party now called for the defense of “the home of socialism” and started to work closely with the government of Jan Smuts.<sup>114</sup> This cooperation gave the CPSA an air of respectability in the eyes of a wider society and even of the South African elite. Its membership grew, and several communists were elected to municipal and provincial councils.

The CPSA’s activities during the war were centred on propaganda about Soviet achievements, Soviet way of life, and Soviet military victories. This work was mostly done by the Friends of the Soviet Union (FSU), an organization created by the CPSA in 1923 on a Comintern instruction.<sup>115</sup> During the war, the FSU fundraising events collected funds, medicines, blood donations, clothes, and other gifts for the U.S.S.R. The 1944 FSU national conference was attended by 600 delegates from all South African provinces. It was patronized and supported by a wide section of South African society, from the elite to the trade unions. Communists were, however, the organizational backbone of the FSU’s activities. They maintained close relations with the Soviet consulates<sup>116</sup> and got propaganda materials with their assistance. FSU events were never segregated, and in the late 1940s the organization started to push into black areas.<sup>130</sup> After the war, this became its undoing.

## 2.6 The Post-War Realignment

In 1944, the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) adopted a new program for “the establishment of a Socialist Republic, based on common ownership of the means of production and the rule of the working class and providing equal rights and opportunities

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Simons and Simons, *Class and Colour*, 483–485.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 492–504.

<sup>115</sup> Filatova and Davidson, *The Hidden Thread*, 175.

<sup>116</sup> Simons and Simons, *Class and Colour*, 536; and Alexander-Simons, *All My Life*, 126. <sup>130</sup> Filatova and Davidson, *The Hidden Thread*, 142.

for all racial and national groups.” National liberation was to be achieved within the framework of the equality of rights in a workers’ republic, a vision of a socialist but common society.<sup>117</sup>

After the war, cooperation between the South African elite and the communists came to an end. The last years of the Smuts government were characterized by tightening segregationist and anti-liberal legislation. This affected, among other things, the trade union movement. Communists attempted to steer the South African Trades and Labour Council (SATLC) to non-racialism, but the upsurge of Afrikaner nationalism and the rigid racial legislation made this cause extremely difficult.<sup>132</sup> Despite communists’ efforts to preserve unity, SATLC split into segregationist and non-segregationist factions. In the mid-1950s, segregated white, coloured, and Indian unions organized their own Trade Union Council of South Africa, and non-racial unions, together with the Council of Non-European Trade Unions, formed the left-leaning South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU). From then on, SACTU became the main communist base.

In 1945, the Council of Non-European Trade Unions claimed a membership of about 160,000. Communists were a major organizing force in African unions, often occupying leading positions. Marks was president of the African Mine Workers Union which, in August 1946, brought out 70,000 workers on strike. The government broke the strike by brute force. Many communists were arrested and charged with sedition.<sup>118</sup> The case against them was later dropped.

The National Party came to power with a host of oppressive laws against non-European trade unions, communists and other troublemakers. In June 1950, the CPSA was banned. Just before the Suppression of Communism Act was enacted, the CPSA’s Central Committee (CC) resolved to dissolve the party. At the time, the CPSA had about 2,000 members, three-quarters of them African.<sup>119</sup> The majority continued their work in trade unions and non-white political organizations as individuals, though this was made increasingly difficult by bans and arrests. “Listed” communists could not occupy leading positions in any organization.

In March 1950, the Transvaal branches of the CPSA, the African National Congress (ANC), the African People’s Organisation (APO), and the South African Indian Congress (SAIC) convened a Freedom of Speech Convention, which protested against the forthcoming Suppression of Communism Act and drew a crowd of 10,000.<sup>135</sup> The convention proposed a series of protest actions and, on the communists’ initiative, a national “stay at home” day on May 1. All of these were banned. After eighteen people

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<sup>117</sup> Consular relations between the U.S.S.R. and South Africa were established in 1942 <sup>132</sup>

Filatova and Davidson, *The Hidden Thread*, 178–189.

<sup>118</sup> Constitution and Programme. Communist Party of South Africa (n.p., n.d. [1949]), 26–29.

<sup>119</sup> Simons and Simons, *Class and Colour*, 554, 575–578; and Alexander-Simons, *All My Life*, 179–180. <sup>135</sup> Alexander-Simons, *All My Life*, 196; Simons and Simons, *Class and Colour*, ch. 24.

were killed by the police, on June 26 the ANC and the CPSA led a national day of mourning for the dead and a strike in protest against the police brutality and the Suppression of Communism Act.<sup>120</sup>

The communists' presence in the ANC ranks was nothing new, but in the 1950s this tendency became more pronounced. The two organizations were drawn closer together by government persecution and by the radicalization of the ANC cadres, particularly in the Transvaal. In 1950, Marks was elected chairman of the ANC's Transvaal branch.<sup>121</sup> Some within the ANC saw this as an attempt by alien ideologues to capture their organization, and later this resulted in the split by the breakaway Pan-Africanist Congress.

In 1951, the ANC, SAIC, and APO started planning the Defiance Campaign. The government ordered five of the campaign's leaders, Kotane, Marks, D.W. Bopape, J.N. Ngwevela, and Yusuf Dadoo—all communists—to resign from their organizations and banned them from attending political gatherings. It also banned the *Guardian* and deprived Sam Kahn and Fred Carneson of their seats in Parliament and the Cape Provincial Council. The banned communists defied their bans and were arrested. This opened the Defiance Campaign.<sup>122</sup> A.P. Mda, a staunch "Africanist," observed that during the campaign white and Indian communists won the trust of African nationalists through close association with them, and that African communists, on the other hand, were influenced by African nationalism and relished the opportunities for African leadership provided by the campaign.<sup>139</sup> The CPSA's Brian Bunting called this process "cross-pollination."<sup>123</sup> It was to have a profound and long-lasting effect on both on the ANC and the party. From this point on, it becomes increasingly difficult to isolate the actions of the party from those of the ANC.

Amazingly, communists could still stand as candidates in elections for representatives of Western Cape coloured voters. In 1952 and 1954, Bunting and Alexander were, respectively, overwhelmingly elected, but Bunting was allowed to stay in Parliament for less than a year, and Alexander was physically prevented from entering Parliament.<sup>141</sup> So this channel too was closed. New security laws passed after the Defiance Campaign made legal work by communists all but impossible. Many continued to work underground.

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Thomas Karis and Gwendolen M. Carter, eds., *From Protest to Challenge. A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, 1882–1964*, Vol. 2: Hope and Challenge (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1973), 408.

<sup>122</sup> Thomas Karis and Gwendolen M. Carter, eds., *From Protest to Challenge. A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, 1882–1964*, Vol. 2: Hope and Challenge (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1973), 408. <sup>139</sup> Karis and Carter, *From Protest*, 406–407.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 416–418. <sup>141</sup>

Ibid., 424.

## 2.7 Underground, the Freedom Charter, and the Armed Struggle

The majority of party members, including those who voted for the dissolution, thought that this was a tactical measure, and that the party would be reconstituted underground. It was extremely difficult to do this in the new circumstances, but some started to establish contacts with their like-minded comrades. Underground party cells were independently formed in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, and Port Elizabeth. Kotane played crucial role in re-establishing communication. The first conference of the South African Communist Party (SACP) was held in late 1953. Kotane was elected its general secretary. The majority of other office bearers were also black.<sup>124</sup>

White communists constituted the core of the South African Congress of Democrats, organized in 1953, according to Bunting, on the request of the African National Congress (ANC). The Congress became part of the congress alliance, which comprised at the time the ANC, the South African Indian Congress, and the South African Coloured People's Organisation, later joined by the South African Congress of Trade Unions.<sup>125</sup>

In June 1955, the four congresses convened the Congress of the People, which met at Kliptown. Three thousand delegates adopted the Freedom Charter, a document that became the ANC's overarching official program. It was based on contributions, solicited by wellbriefed volunteers, and collated by a small drafting committee.<sup>126</sup> Communists played an important role both in the organization of the congress and in drafting of the Charter. Several communists were credited with or claimed the authorship of the draft, Rusty Bernstein and Ben Turok among them.<sup>127</sup> The text of the Charter itself was the best testimony to communist influence. It was a manifesto for a radical political and socioeconomic transformation of South Africa by means of nationalization and redistribution of the main means of production and of establishing state control over other spheres of economy.

It demanded full political, social, and economic equality for all racial groups, defined and managed by the state.<sup>128</sup> In the Treason Trial that followed the congress, the state built its case on the assertion that the Charter was a communist document. Though the organizers insisted that it was not, many later publications both by the ANC and SACP insisted that the Charter exceeded the framework not only of "bourgeois democracy" but also of "national democracy," and that it was, in fact, a program for "people's democracy."<sup>129</sup> The contents of the Charter were closer to the Communist Party of South Africa 1944 program

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<sup>124</sup> Brian Bunting, *Moses Kotane: South African Revolutionary* (Belville, Cape Town: Mayibuye Books, UWC, 1998), 199.

<sup>125</sup> Brian Bunting, *Moses Kotane: South African Revolutionary* (Belville, Cape Town: Mayibuye Books, UWC, 1998), 199.

<sup>126</sup> Alexander-Simons, *All My Life*, 271; Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, 197–199.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid*,

<sup>128</sup> Rodney Davenport and Christopher Saunders, *South Africa: A Modern History* (London: Macmillan, 2000), 404.

<sup>129</sup> For the debate on influences on the Charter, see Neame, *The Congress Movement*, Vol. 3, 1928–1961, 430–434, and Ben Turok, "Calm Down: The ANC Is Not About to Seize Mines," *Times*, July 18, 2009.

than to any other earlier or later document of the ANC. The main difference between the two programs was that the Charter did not mention socialism by name.

The trial of 156 organizers and activists of the Congress of the People, charged with treason, gave the accused an opportunity to meet and discuss the situation. During this trial, particularly after the Sharpeville massacre (March 21, 1960), the introduction of the state of emergency, and the banning of the ANC ten days later, some of the inmates came to the conclusion that the only way forward was armed resistance. Different sources mention the same short list of people who were at the center of these discussions: Walter Sisulu, Nelson Mandela, Joe Slovo, Lionel (Rusty) Bernstein, Duma Nokwe, Raymond Mhlaba, Kotane, Marks, and Joe Matthews.<sup>130</sup>

All were at some time members of the Central Committee (CC) of the underground party. At its 1958 conference, the party elected a fifteen-member CC: Kotane (general secretary), Dadoo (chairman), Bram Fischer, Bernstein, Slovo, Michael Harmel, Sisulu, Marks, Dan Tloome, Ruth First, Bunting, Alexander, Carneson, Mhlaba, and Mariemuthu (M.P.) Naicker. Four more members were co-opted in 1960: Joe Matthews, Nelson Mandela, Bartholomew Hlapane (who soon became a state witness at the Rivonia Trial), and Robert Hepple (who agreed to become one, was released on this basis, but was then helped to flee the country by Fischer). According to the authoritative publication, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, it was this CC that in December 1960 took the fateful decision to embark on the armed struggle.<sup>131</sup>

## 2.8 The SACP and the U.S.S.R.

*The Road to Democracy* states that “the fact that the SACP was the first to take the decision about the armed struggle would have little long-term significance” because of the overlap between the membership of SACP’s Central Committee (CC) and the Johannesburg-based executive of the African National Congress (ANC).<sup>132</sup> However, the fact that the armed struggle was started by the SACP, and that it was the SACP (and not the ANC, then unknown to Soviet officials) that applied for Soviet assistance and received it, had an enormous and long-lasting effect on the SACP itself, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), and the ANC. Oliver Tambo’s first visit to the U.S.S.R. in 1963, after MK became the ANC’s military wing, was organized through party channels, and Tambo was accompanied by Kotane—a communist known to the Soviet party (CPSU) since the 1930s. It was Kotane who, as the ANC’s treasurer general, forwarded many ANC requests to the Soviet Union

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<sup>130</sup> “The Freedom Charter. Adopted at the Congress of the People, Kliptown, 26 June 1955.”

<sup>131</sup> African Communist 110 (1987), 46. Within the framework of Soviet theory, the term “national democracy” referred to former colonies that strived to build a non-capitalist society; “people’s democracy” referred to the countries that based their policy on “scientific Marxism,” usually countries of the Soviet bloc.

<sup>132</sup> Bernard Magubane et al., “The Turn to Armed Struggle,” in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, Vol. 1: 1960–1970 (South African Democracy Education Trust, Cape Town: Zed Press, 2004), 71.

in the years to come. According to Vladimir Shubin, a former staff member of the International Department of the CPSU's Central Committee, "*the fact that they came from the SACP general secretary doubtless gave them added importance in the eyes of the Soviets.*"<sup>133</sup>

The first two official SACP delegations arrived in Moscow in 1960. The second of these visits was particularly important, as two members of the delegation, Matthews and Harmel, participated at the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, convened to discuss the new Soviet theory of national liberation struggle. Its essence was that communists were to play a "vanguard" role in "national democratic revolutions" (NDR), which, with Soviet assistance and the correct policies, could lead to socialism.<sup>134</sup>

In October 1961, Dadoo and Kotane came to the Soviet Union to solicit assistance for the SACP's armed struggle. The request was granted on November 28. On December 16, the first MK bombs exploded, marking the first salvo of the planned armed offensives against the apartheid regime. From 1960 until the collapse of the U.S.S.R., the Soviets provided massive support to both the SACP, and, from 1963, to the ANC. They trained and armed MK cadres both in the U.S.S.R. and later in Angola, and assisted with some of its operations.<sup>135</sup> They accommodated SACP conferences and provided air tickets or transport for SACP and ANC cadres and helped to organize international anti-apartheid campaigns. SACP and ANC delegations regularly visited the U.S.S.R. Party cadres studied at the Lenin School. They also went to the Soviet Union for rest and treatment. In addition, the U.S.S.R. supplied the party with money—in the late 1980s U.S.\$100,000 a year. The ANC was paid separately, and more, but while the ANC could get funding elsewhere, few were willing to support MK, and only "fraternal parties," and particularly the CPSU, were prepared to finance the SACP.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Michael Harmel, "Some Notes on the Communist Party in South Africa" (unpublished manuscript, 1960), 14–16, quoted in Vladimir Shubin, *ANC: A View from Moscow* (Belville, Cape Town: Mayibuye Books, UWC, 1999), 14–15; Irina Filatova, interview with Joe Matthews, November 4, 2004; Elinor Sisulu, *Walter and Albertina Sisulu: In Our Lifetime* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002); Vladimir Shubin, "Tovarishch Nelson Mandela," *Azia i Afrika segodnia* 4 (2014): 6–9; "SACP Official Tribute to Madiba delivered by General Secretary Blade Nzimande, 13 December 2013," accessed April 15, 2016; "Statement on the Passing of Cde Nelson Mandela. African National Congress. Secretary General's Office. 6 December 2013," accessed April 15, 2016; and "SACP Salutes Walter Sisulu. 13 May 2005," accessed April 15, 2016.

<sup>135</sup> Magubane *et al*, "The Turn," 80–83. Brian Bunting confirmed that the decision on the transition to the armed struggle "was taken by the SACP's Central Committee, and nobody else, in December 1960" (Irina Filatova, interview with B. Bunting, February 2, 2006. For confirmations from the Moscow archives, see Filatova and Davidson, *The Hidden Thread*, 299, 306).

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., "The Turn," 83.

## 2.9 “The Road to South African Freedom” and Exile

In 1962, at its 5th Congress, held underground, the party adopted a new program, The Road to South African Freedom. The program declared that South Africa was a colony of a “*special type*,” in which colonizers and colonized coexisted within one state. It stressed that Africans’ liberation struggle was the core of the unfolding National Democratic Revolution (NDR), which was proclaimed the immediate goal of the party. The post-revolutionary state would be “*the state of national democracy*,” commencing the second stage of the NDR, which would lead to full socialism. The Freedom Charter was described as a document “suitable as a general statement of the aims of a state of national democracy.” The armed struggle was part of the program, and non-violence was termed “harmful.”<sup>137</sup> Many points of this program were directly borrowed from the declaration adopted by the International Meeting of Communist and Workers’ Parties in Moscow that Harmel and Matthews attended. The NDR, the “state of national democracy” and its definition, for example, came directly from that declaration.

The next South African Communist Party (SACP) program, adopted twenty-seven years later, noted that “*the 1962 programme has made an indelible contribution to the scientific analysis of the situation in South Africa and to the practical revolutionary work for national liberation. It has proved to be a major guiding light over more than a quarter of a century of struggle, inspiring the work of the party and non-party militants alike.*”<sup>138</sup> The main points of the 1962 program guide the party to this day.

Party activities inside the county soon ended. By the end of 1963, all Central Committee (CC) members were in prison or in exile. The SACP and Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) were dealt a deadly blow in July 1963 when ten leaders of MK, most of them communists, were arrested at Liliesleaf Farm in Rivonia. Eight of those put on trial—Mandela (who was arrested earlier), Sisulu, Mhlaba, Govan Mbeki, Andrew Mlangeni, Elias Motsoaledi, and Ahmed Kathrada—were sentenced to life imprisonment.<sup>158</sup> The Rivonia Trial and the new ninety-day detention law made exile the only realistic option for MK, the party, and the African National Congress (ANC) leadership. Kotane, Marks, Nokwe, and other ANC leaders went to Dar es Salaam, the movement’s new headquarters. Slovo, Harmel, Dadoo, and other communists who were not ANC members moved to London, where they established the SACP’s headquarters. The internal work was left to Bram Fischer, but he was arrested, and in 1966 sentenced to life imprisonment.

The party’s members were now scattered on several continents. Communists continued their work as ANC members or as MK fighters, but the party as an organization was severely dislocated. Both the ANC and SACP were in dire straits financially and

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<sup>137</sup> Shubin, ANC, 47–48.

<sup>138</sup> Filatova and Davidson, *The Hidden Thread*, 302–305. <sup>158</sup> Shubin, ANC, 39–44.

organizationally.<sup>139</sup> The ANC received some assistance from Tanzania and Zambia, but the SACP, with non-Africans in its leadership and close ties with Moscow, was regarded with suspicion in independent African countries. Soviet assistance was the party's lifeline. The London Aid Committee, a charity headed by Dadoo and Julius First, was created to help finance the party.

The first CC meeting in exile took place in 1965 in Prague. It set up its Central Executive Committee in London, tasked to rebuild the party, communicate with CC members in Dar es Salaam, and liaise with cadres still in South Africa. The next meeting was convened in Moscow in 1967. Kotane, Dadoo, Slovo, Marks, Mark Shope, Bunting, and Harmel were present to discuss relations between the ANC and the party.<sup>140</sup> The ANC leadership, particularly Kotane, thought that the SACP should keep a low profile in Africa to avoid alienating the Zambian and Tanzanian governments. Kotane's colleagues were concerned that this would lead to the party's disintegration and its "capture" by the ANC. It was resolved that a party member should sit on the Consultative Congress Committee in Tanzania to coordinate the work of congress alliance partners. However, the problem persisted.<sup>141</sup>

## 2.10 The Morogoro Conference and the Liberation Movement

The African National Congress (ANC) Morogoro Consultative Conference, held in April and May 1969, was a milestone in the history of both the ANC and the South African Communist Party (SACP). It opened ANC ranks to non-Africans, thus strengthening the role of communists within the organization. It restructured the congress alliance to comprise the ANC, the SACP, and the South African Congress of Trade Unions, thus recognizing the SACP as a separate organization from the ANC. It created a Revolutionary Council (headed by Tambo) to coordinate the armed struggle and the underground inside the country.<sup>162</sup> Communists dominated both the council and the ANC national executive elected at the conference.

Most importantly, the conference adopted a Strategy and Tactics program. The program marked the ANC's radical departure from the "*common society*" vision of the Freedom Charter and described the South African situation as colonialism of a special type. The program opened with the declaration that "*the struggle of the oppressed people of South Africa is taking place within an international context of transition to the Socialist system.*"<sup>142</sup> It asserted that the existence of the socialist system enabled liberation from "foreign oppression" to extend beyond "mere formal political control" and to encompass economic

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<sup>139</sup> Filatova and Davidson, *The Hidden Thread*, ch. 12–15; Shubin, *ANC*; and Eddy Maloka, *The South African Communist Party: Exile and After Apartheid* (Cape Town: Jacana Media, 2013), 66–67.

<sup>140</sup> "The Road to South African Freedom. Programme of the South African Communist Party," accessed July 8, 2016.

<sup>141</sup> "The Path to Power. Programme of the South African Communist Party Adopted at the 7th Congress, 1989," *African Communist* 118 (1989): 73–74. <sup>162</sup> Maloka, *The South African*, 16–17.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 21–22, 111.

emancipation. The document incorporated the armed struggle, the National Democratic Revolution, the two-stage revolution, and socialism as an ultimate goal of the liberation movement—in other words, all the main elements of the SACP 1962 program.<sup>143</sup> This Strategy and Tactics document laid the basis for the similar documents that have been passed at every ANC national conference since.

The Morogoro resolutions met strong opposition from some leading ANC members. They objected to what they saw as a capture of the ANC by the racial minorities, and particularly by the party. In 1975, this opposition was expelled from the ANC. But, despite denials, communist influence on the ANC, both in ideology and organization, was obvious. Even Tambo was concerned when, for example, the party members met separately before meetings of the Revolutionary Council, arguing that this might divide the ANC membership. He emphasized that the party should work in the tradition of Kotane—that is, act discreetly and not organize as an independent force.<sup>144</sup>

By the time of the conference, Kotane was in a hospital in Moscow (he would not return). In his absence, Tambo, Alfred Nzo, Marks, Dadoo, and Slovo had a formal ANC-SACP meeting that resolved that both organizations would maintain regular non-public contact, and that a leading SACP member in the ANC would be appointed as a liaison between the Central Committee (CC) and Tambo (in effect, a substitute to Kotane).<sup>145</sup> Yet the augmented meeting of the CC in Moscow, which met a year later, stated that the party had “*failed to play a leading role within the national movement and its independent role as the vanguard Party.*” The CC in exile, it was noted, did not work as a collective, “of which members in leading positions in the ANC were an integral and functioning part.” Even “*leading members of the Party, however strategically placed in the national movement or Mkhonto, do not function as Party cadres.*” The meeting decided that wherever there were two or more party members in the same area, they should create units that should be in direct communication with the CC or its nominees.<sup>167</sup>

The party struggled with the definition of its role in the liberation movement, of which it was a “vanguard”— yet, simultaneously part of an alliance “led” or “headed” by the ANC. The meaning of these three notions and the correlation between them remained a point of contention and theoretical uncertainty. The 1970 meeting resolved that the SACP’s vanguard role would depend on the “correctness of our political line, on our ability to win non-Party comrades to supporting our line and on our cohesiveness as an organisation.”<sup>146</sup>

The suppression of the Soweto uprising swelled the ranks of the SACP and of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), which by then had moved to the camps in Angola. By the late 1970s, the SACP

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<sup>143</sup> Shubin, ANC, 88–92.

<sup>144</sup> “African National Congress 1969. Strategy and Tactics of the ANC,” accessed April 20, 2016.

<sup>145</sup> Shubin, ANC, 119–120; Maloka, *The South African*, 36–37, 39. <sup>167</sup>

*Ibid.*, ANC, 112–117.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 118–119; Maloka, *The South African*, 35.

had regional organizations or cells in London, Dar es Salaam, Lusaka, Moscow, Angola, Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland, Botswana, and Cape Town. In 1981, the party headquarters were moved from London to Luanda; in 1982, to Maputo; and in 1984, to Lusaka, where the ANC headquarters had been since 1977.<sup>147</sup>

By the early 1980s, relations between the party and the ANC had become so close that ideological distinctions between the two organizations were blurred. In 1979, the Politico-Military Strategy Commission stated that “no member of this Commission had any doubts about the ultimate need to continue our revolution towards a socialist order.” It stressed that “the seizure of power by the people must be understood not only by us, but by the masses as the beginning of the process in which the instruments of state will be used to progressively destroy the heritage of all forms of national and social inequality ... Care, however, must be exercised in the way we project ourselves publicly on this question.” The commission, though created by the ANC and headed by Tambo, had a communist majority.<sup>148</sup> Increasingly, the SACP insisted that “already at this stage” the liberation movement should cooperate with it in “bringing to the fore the noble aspirations of labouring [*sic*] people in our country for socialism.”<sup>149</sup>

Yet the party behaved as a separate organization both within and outside the ANC. In 1981, the CC resolution Party Work in Fraternal Organisations stipulated that communists in the liberation movement should “discuss and decide collectively on their common approach to all matters which affect the basic direction and content of the revolutionary struggle, and to ensure that they advance and support such decision in any organ in which the matter arises.” Moreover, the resolution stated that communists working “at any level of a fraternal organisation are accountable to the Party collective.” In 1982, the party started to establish its own cells among MK cadres in Angola.<sup>172</sup>

## 2.11 The Changing Situation and the Party Policy

From the early 1970s, the party began sending its operatives inside the country in order to recreate its structures and re-establish its presence there. The most successful mission was that of Chris Hani, assistant general secretary of the party and a Umkhonto we Sizwe commander, in 1974. Neither the party nor the African National Congress (ANC) were responsible for the rise of the Black Consciousness movement, but those whom Hani and other operatives recruited used the revolutionary situation to establish a South African Communist Party (SACP) foothold inside the country. With the beginning of the People’s War, party cadres

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<sup>147</sup> Shubin, ANC, 119.

<sup>148</sup> “ANC 1979. The Green Book. Report of the Politico-Military Strategy Commission to the ANC National Executive, August 1979,” accessed June 10, 2016.

<sup>149</sup> Maloka, *The South African*, 46.<sup>172</sup>  
 Ibid., 44–45.

worked in United Democratic Front (UDF) structures, and the SACP had several formal meetings with the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).<sup>150</sup>

The 6th SACP Congress, which took place in November 1984 in Moscow, discussed the new situation: The People's War, the emergence of the UDF, and the impending unification of anti-apartheid trade unions in COSATU. A key concern of the congress was security. In 1981, after a spy network was uncovered within the ANC, its security machine started to use torture. The party called on interrogators to desist from methods which "undermine revolutionary morality." The 6th Congress, however, instructed the Central Committee to establish a three-person tribunal for "imposition of maximum sentence," accountable only to the Politburo.<sup>151</sup>

The party's 7th Congress, held in Havana in April 1989, adopted a new program, *The Path to Power*. The program repeated the SACP's mantra on colonialism of a special type, the National Democratic Revolution, and the two-stage revolution. The party still believed that the world was in the process of transition from capitalism to socialism and that apartheid could be defeated only through the seizure of power by the liberation movement. The program stressed, however, the importance of mass political mobilization in combination with the armed struggle, and discussed, for the first time openly, the prospect of negotiations.<sup>152</sup> Such negotiations were deemed possible only when the liberation movement was strong enough and ready for them.<sup>153</sup> But preliminary talks were already being held, led by Thabo Mbeki, a Politburo member, with Tambo's blessing. Not even the whole Politburo knew about them.

## 2.12 The Roots of Party Influence in Exile

Several factors explain the party's significant influence on the African National Congress (ANC) and its alliance partners. As early as the 1930s, communists began to occupy important positions in the ANC. Throughout the 1950s and particularly in exile, this tendency grew ever more pronounced. For decades communists occupied strategic positions in ANC structures and in Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK). According to Mac Maharaj, not just the leadership, but also the majority of trained MK cadres were communists.<sup>154</sup> But the main source of the party's strength was its enormous ideological influence on the ANC, the United Democratic Front (UDF), the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), and beyond. In effect, by 1990 the ANC did not have any other ideology except that of the South African Communist Party (SACP). From 1969 on, every detail of the SACP theory of national liberation movement was incorporated into ANC official documents. There were debates, objections, and dissent, but the majority of non-communists in the movement still accepted SACP views.

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<sup>150</sup> Shubin, ANC, 101–103; Maloka, *The South African*, 30–34, 61.

<sup>151</sup> Maloka, *The South African*, 49–50; "The Path to Power. Programme of the South African Communist Party as adopted at the Seventh Congress, 1989," accessed July 5, 2016.

<sup>152</sup> Pdraig O'Malley, *Shades of Difference: Mac Maharaj and the Struggle for South Africa* (New York: Viking, 2007), 363.

<sup>153</sup> Vladimir Shubin, *Afrikanskii natsionalnyi congress v gody podpolia i vooruzhennoi borby* (Moscow: Africa Institute, 1999), 401–402.

<sup>154</sup> Filatova and Davidson, *The Hidden Thread*, 335–337.

One reason for this was a system of communist education. Throughout its history, the party taught Marxism to non-party people, usually workers. In exile, many ANC cadres were concentrated in a few centers, creating an ideal situation for political education. Party teaching embraced the Soviet theory of national liberation movement (the two-stage revolution, the party's vanguard role, and the National Democratic Revolution) with South African additions (colonialism of a special type). All MK cadres in the camps went through such political courses, taught originally by Jack Simons, the party's intellectual luminary, and by Mark Shope and Ronnie Kasrils.<sup>155</sup> One of their tasks was to train political commissars, who became instructors themselves.

A remarkable 95 percent of all ANC members abroad went through military training. The most common basic course in all such training, Military Combat Work (MCW), originated in the U.S.S.R., where MK cadres were trained from 1962. Apart from the principles of organizing underground networks for the People's War, the course explained such issues as "redistribution of wealth, of land and other means of production" and "Lenin's principles of Party leadership in the MCW."<sup>156</sup> Different versions of cadres' notes of the course circulated in the ANC at least from the early 1970s, and in 1988 a standardized version appeared in the SACP periodical *Umsebenzi*. The ANC Second National Conference (Kabwe, 1985) stated that MCW derived "from the experience of the Bolsheviks in three revolutions" and stressed its importance for the whole movement.<sup>157</sup> The conference also recommended that the course in Marxist-Leninist revolutionary theory be included into ANC's political education syllabus.

Party propaganda played a role too. The party periodicals, the *African Communist* and *Inkululeko—Freedom* (renamed *Umsebenzi* in 1985), and the ANC official organ, *Sechaba*, were obligatory reading among the cadres in exile and were increasingly distributed inside the country. There was no political or ideological difference between the ANC and SACP publications. If an unorthodox opinion appeared in any of them, it was quickly corrected.<sup>158</sup> Communists often published in *Sechaba*, sometimes under their own names, though more often under pseudonyms. Naturally, *Sechaba* reflected the topics discussed in the *African Communist* and in the party generally. Radio Freedom and Radio Moscow maintained the same line.

The apartheid regime itself contributed to the popularity of the SACP by basing its propaganda on anti-communism and presenting itself as a bastion against the communist onslaught. Inside the country, communists took the brunt of repression. This inevitably attracted apartheid's

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<sup>155</sup> African National Congress. National Consultative Conference, June 1985. Commission on Cadre Policy, Political and Ideological Work. Internal Commission Report. Commission on Strategy and Tactics, Rhodes House Library, Oxford, MSS Afr s 2151, B3.

<sup>156</sup> Irina Filatova, conversation with Joe Slovo, November 1989; Hugh Macmillan, *The Lusaka Years: The ANC in Exile in Zambia, 1963–1994* (Cape Town: Jacana Media, 2013); and Stephen Ellis, *External Mission: The ANC in Exile, 1960–1990* (London: Hurst & Company, 2012).

<sup>157</sup> Mark Gevisser, *The Dream Deferred: Thabo Mbeki* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2007), 471–473.

<sup>158</sup> O'Malley, *Shades*, 340–341, 357–359; and Maloka, *The South African*, 103.

opponents to communist ideas.<sup>159</sup> The prestige of the Soviet Union also added to the popularity of communism. The whole situation of anti-apartheid struggle within the context of the Cold War created conditions conducive to the popularity of communist ideology not only among ANC cadres in exile, but also among the UDF and COSATU inside the country.

### 2.13 The Unbanning and Return Home

Party leaders expected that on February 2, 1990, F.W. de Klerk would unban the African National Congress (ANC) and other organizations—but not the South African Communist Party (SACP).<sup>7</sup> De Klerk's speech caught them unprepared. An immediate problem was whether all in the leadership should reveal their party membership. The politburo (PB) was divided.<sup>160</sup> Mbeki let his membership lapse, as did his associates, Jacob Zuma and Aziz Pahad. Eventually, half the members of the Central Committee elected at the 7th Congress left the party. Slovo (by then general secretary) and Hani carried the party banner into the new era. The split spread to the ANC, and the distrust between the two factions was never healed.<sup>161</sup>

The party had to create an interim transitional leadership and to decide what to do with its underground networks inside the country. An underground consultative conference was held in Tongaat in May 1990. In the early 1980s, the ANC had launched Operation Vula, aimed at establishing internal structures and communication between them and Lusaka, and at promoting the People's War. Tambo and Slovo headed the operation. All key cadres inside the country (Maharaj, Kasrils, Sphiwe Nyanda, Pravin Gordhan, and others) were communists.<sup>185</sup> Now the party used Vula networks and cadres to organize the conference. The party's role, the participants thought, was to organize mass pressure on the government in order to ensure the advent of "people's power" and to create organs of people's power to be ready for a transition.

The fate of underground structures remained unclear. The PB meeting in Lusaka on February 15 had decided that they should remain intact. Mandela also supported the idea of maintaining the underground. A few weeks later, the government security forces uncovered Vula, and several people, including Maharaj, were arrested. Maharaj felt that he and his comrades did not get enough direction and support from the leadership, first of all from Slovo. He ultimately resigned both from the SACP and the ANC. The cohesion of the party was clearly breaking down.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Maloka, *The South African*, 116; Simon Adams, *Comrade Minister: The South African Communist Party and the Transition from Apartheid to Democracy* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2001).

<sup>160</sup> O'Malley, *Shades*, 353–357; Mia Roth, *The Communist Party in South Africa: Racism, Eurocentricity and Moscow, 1921–1950* (n.p.: Partridge, 2016).

<sup>161</sup> Maloka, *The South African*, 119. <sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, *The South African*, 122.

<sup>162</sup> Joe Slovo, "Has Socialism Failed? South African Communist Party. January 1990," accessed July 5, 2016.

The public launch of the legal SACP was held on July 29, 1990, attended by 45,000 people. A twenty-two-member interim leadership group, which included cadres from exile and from the United Democratic Front (UDF), was introduced, with Slovo as general secretary.<sup>163</sup> The party enjoyed enormous prestige and popularity. By the time of its 8th Congress, it had swollen to 21,000 members and 300 branches.<sup>164</sup> But many new branches were weak and inexperienced, and some new members who came from the UDF (which was dissolved in August 1991) were more radical and uncompromising than the party core. It was, nevertheless, a step toward a mass party.

In the early 1990s, the party struggled to find its identity after the collapse of the international communist movement and the U.S.S.R. The 7th Congress paid lip service to the new situation, but by the early 1990s this was no longer possible. In 1990, Joe Slovo offered his own view in a pamphlet titled *Has Socialism Failed?*<sup>165</sup> Slovo rejected Stalinism and proposed a “*democratic socialism*” for South Africa. The pamphlet was attacked both from the left and the right of the party. The debate on the nature of socialism and the future socialist South Africa dominated the 8th Party Congress in December 1991. A *Manifesto of the South African Communist Party: Building Workers’ Power for Democratic Change* was adopted. The document noted the unfavourable international situation, but otherwise stuck to the old script, starting with SACP’s vanguard role in the struggles for socialism. Hanu now became general secretary, and Slovo, chairman.<sup>166</sup>

The party created its own legal organization, separate from the ANC, but its image as an independent entity, acting separately from the ANC, failed to materialize. Communists were an important part of the ANC negotiating team and used their clout to achieve compromises that were not popular with their own party. In August 1990, Slovo proposed a unilateral suspension of the ANC’s armed struggle and, with Mandela’s help, was able to push it through, enabling negotiations to begin.<sup>167</sup> In 1992, when negotiations collapsed, Slovo proposed an amnesty and the “sunset clauses” that allowed a period of post-election power-sharing. When Chris Hanu was murdered in April 1993, the party leadership did everything to prevent violence and to keep negotiations going.<sup>168</sup>

Radicals in the ANC and the party were not happy with such developments. After the Boipatong massacre, the alliance started “rolling mass action”—a series of mass protest rallies, meetings, and marches aimed at pressurizing and ultimately toppling the government. The SACP was a party to this decision, and its leading activist, Kasrils, led a march of 60,000

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<sup>163</sup> Maloka, *The South African*, 126.

<sup>164</sup> Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom* (London: Abacus, 1995), 701–702.

<sup>165</sup> Joe Slovo, “Negotiations: What Room for Compromise?” accessed July 5, 2016.

<sup>166</sup> “Socialism is the Future, Build it Now! SACP Strategic Perspectives. As adopted and amended by the SACP 9th National Congress, April 1995,” accessed July 5, 2016.

<sup>167</sup> “Strategy and Tactics As amended at the 50th National Conference, December 1997,” accessed July 6, 2016 (Policy Documents).

<sup>168</sup> “SACP 10th Congress Resolutions,” accessed July 1, 2016.

unarmed people on Bisho, capital of Ciskei, in order to topple its military dictator, Oupa Gqozo.<sup>169</sup> Twenty-eight people were killed, and scores wounded as a result. This cooled hot heads for a while, but divisions remained.

## 2.14 Relations with the Mandela and Mbeki Governments

With the African National Congress (ANC) in power, the party leaders at all levels were deeply involved in government and the administrative structures of the new democratic state, and had much less time for party activities. Yet, government business did not involve the party as an organization, for it never contested elections. Whatever their convictions, communists in government acted on behalf of the ANC.<sup>170</sup> They might influence government policy, but the party could not demand that they implement its policy. In any case, at that time the party did not have a program different from the ANC's.

In April 1995, the 9th Congress of the South African Communist Party (SACP) adopted a new program, *Socialism is the Future, Build it Now! SACP Strategic Perspectives*. The program denounced World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF)-type reforms, in particular social-spending cuts and privatization.<sup>171</sup> It expressed its support for the government's Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) on condition that it would provide for the basic needs of the people through redistribution and industrialization, and not for a "one-sided drive for competitiveness and an unending attempt to woo foreign investors." "Capital" was defined as "the main strategic opponent" of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR). The authors explained that "the NDR is not a detour, but the most direct route to socialism," thus the main slogan of the program. One novelty in the program was the substitute of "socialisation" for "nationalisation."<sup>172</sup>

The SACP and Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) saw RDP not just as a means to improve the socio-economic conditions of the black majority, but as the core of the "developmental" path to socialism. But in 1996, the government introduced a new macroeconomic program, Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR), which aimed at macroeconomic stability, fiscal discipline, and economic growth through privatization, foreign investment, and trade liberalization.<sup>173</sup> COSATU and the party denounced GEAR outright, despite the fact that many prominent SACP members, who were in the government, supported and implemented this policy. The ANC membership was equally divided about GEAR, as it smacked of IMF recipes and went against popular expectations.

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<sup>169</sup> "SACP 11th Congress Resolutions," accessed July 1, 2016.

<sup>170</sup> "52nd National Conference: Adopted Strategy and Tactics of the ANC. Building A National Democratic Society," accessed July 9, 2016 (Policy Documents).

<sup>171</sup> Resolutions of the 9th COSATU National Congress. (n.p., n.d. [September 2006]), 1.4: The National Democratic Revolution (NDR) and Socialism.

<sup>172</sup> "Statement of the Augmented Central Committee, 26 November, 2006," accessed July 10, 2016.

<sup>173</sup> DomzaNet, Communist University Blog, subscribers mailing list email, received June 4, 2007.

Mbeki, the main author of GEAR and Mandela's deputy in the ANC and in government, became the party's main enemy. The 1997 ANC National Conference, which elected Mbeki to the presidency of the ANC, made things worse. The conference adopted a new Strategy and Tactics, inspired by Mbeki. It pledged to continue the NDR and stressed that "*national oppression and its social consequences*" could not be removed by "formal democracy underpinned by market forces." But it mentioned neither the Freedom Charter nor nationalization. Moreover, the authors declared the development of an African bourgeoisie as one of NDR's goals.<sup>174</sup>

It was at this point that the SACP started to acquire its own voice. The 10th SACP Congress (July 1998) passed a special resolution on GEAR. "The overall thrust of GEAR," it ran, "is not the appropriate macro-economic framework for our society, and its overall thrust must be rejected." But the party saw internal pressure as the only way to do this and offered "*to engage the government on the contents of GEAR.*"<sup>175</sup> Neither the ANC nor the SACP critics of GEAR in government positions dared to challenge Mandela or Mbeki openly.

Under the Mbeki presidency, the objections of the party and COSATU were partially offset by Africanization and "Black Economic Empowerment," from which many of their leaders benefited. GEAR too soon found itself in retreat. Under the pressure from the left, privatization was quickly dropped, and government control and regulation were greatly increased throughout the economy.<sup>176</sup> But for the party this was not enough, for its socialist objective had disappeared from the government agenda.

The 11th SACP Congress (July 2002) voted "to raise the independent profile of the SACP," "to engage in a struggle to promote a working class hegemony within the NDR," and to ensure its socialist character. Moreover, the Central Committee (CC) had "to establish mechanisms to more effectively utilise the large number of SACP members, who are public representatives, to promote SACP policy."<sup>177</sup>

The draft of the new version of the Strategy and Tactics to be adopted by the ANC in 2007 discarded the prospects of socialism altogether. The aim of the NDR was now a "national democratic society," which was "social democratic" in nature. The "revolution"—an ongoing process—had not just the black bourgeoisie, but also some sections of the white population among its "motive forces." The contents of the revolution also changed. "The liberation of Africans in particular and Blacks in general from political and socio-economic bondage" remained its main goal, but for the first time, the document mentioned "uplifting the quality

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<sup>174</sup> "SACP. The South African Road to Socialism. 13th Congress Political Programme of the SACP, 2012–2017," accessed July 10, 2018.

<sup>175</sup> "ANC. Unity in Action towards Socio-Economic Freedom. Strategy and Tactics of the ANC. December 2012," accessed July 10, 2018.

<sup>176</sup> "Consolidating Working Class Power for Quality Jobs—Towards 2015: Programme Arising from COSATU 8th National Congress. 9 October 2003," accessed July 10, 2016.

<sup>177</sup> Henry R. Pike, *A History of Communism in South Africa* (Germiston: Christian Mission International of South Africa, 1985).

of life of all South Africans.” The document pledged to encourage a common “national identity” and the use of the state “as an instrument of social cohesion.”<sup>178</sup> Whatever the wording, the 2007 Strategy and Tactics was the death knell for the NDR as a route to socialism.

The campaign against GEAR, against the new interpretation of the NDR, and against Mbeki personally gained momentum before the 2007 ANC National Conference. The rallying cry of the Left was the return of the ANC to the ideals of the Freedom Charter and “*the spirit of Morogoro*.” The political resolution of the 9th COSATU Congress in September 2006 adopted “*an official position that rejects the separation of the NDR from socialism and asserts that the dictatorship of the proletariat is the only guarantee that there will be a transition from NDR to socialism.*”<sup>179</sup> In November 2006, the party’s CC triumphantly announced a general “*shift to the left*” in society.

The attack of the SACP and COSATU on the new Strategy and Tactics was particularly vehement. Their leaders denounced it in the media, and a popular SACP Communist University website called it “fascist.”<sup>180</sup> Though the document was passed, almost unchanged, by the 2007 ANC’s National Conference in Polokwane, Mbeki and his followers suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the team headed by Mbeki’s deputy, Jacob Zuma. This could have been achieved only with the support of the SACP, COSATU, and some ANC structures. The wording of the document proved less important than the hope that the government, under Zuma, would implement the party’s policy.

## 2.15 The SACP in the Zuma Government

The party vigorously campaigned against Mbeki’s successor, Kgalema Motlanthe, in order to remove him from power. Zuma was elected president in 2009. The top South African Communist Party (SACP) leadership, including Blade Nzimande, served in both of his cabinets (2009 and 2014).

Yet the party’s new program, adopted at its 13th Congress in 2012, stated that “*since 1994 SACP has been a ‘party of governance’, not a governing party as such,*” despite the fact that “*tens of thousands of communists have taken up the challenges and responsibilities of governance.*”<sup>181</sup> The program stated that the SACP “*has every right to contest elections in its own right—should it so choose.*” But, it declared, “*the SACP is a vanguard party of socialism, not a narrowly electoralist formation.*” The party denounced “*neo-liberalism*” and the “*free*

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<sup>178</sup> Edward Roux, S.P. Bunting: A Political Biography (Cape Town: African Bookman, 1944); Edward Roux, Time Longer Than Rope: A History of Black Man’s Struggle for Freedom in South Africa (London: Victor Gollancz, 1948).

<sup>179</sup> Johns, Raising the Red Flag; Edward Roux, Time Longer Than Rope: A History of Black Man’s Struggle for Freedom in South Africa (London: Victor Gollancz, 1948).

<sup>180</sup> Lerumo, A. [Michael Harmel], Fifty Fighting Years (London: Inkululeko Publishers, 2009).

<sup>181</sup> Simons and Simons, Class and Colour; The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Vol. 1 (1960–1970) (South African Democracy Education Trust, Cape Town: Zed Press, 2004).

*market*” and proposed the same road to socialism—the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) and “*working class hegemony over the state.*”

The African National Congress (ANC) also spoke the language of the party: the NDR was its official policy, and the latest version of its Strategy and Tactics announced the transition to the second stage of the revolution, which would lead to the “*developmental*” state and the national-democratic society. Socialism was not mentioned by name, but the contents of the second stage are defined by the principles of the Freedom Charter and their implementation—by the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP).<sup>182</sup>

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) proclaimed exactly the same principles. Its policy was the working class–driven NDR, whose objectives were expressed in the Freedom Charter and the RDP. Its attitude to the SACP was more paternal than fraternal. Its program, adopted at its 8th National Congress (2003) called the SACP “*the vanguard of the working class*” and sought “*to build it into a strong, mass-based organisation that can truly be the bedrock for workers.*” It also pledged to “*provide financial and material support to the SACP*” and to encourage its members to join the SACP and promised “*to jealously defend the progressive and working class bias of the ANC.*”<sup>183</sup> The SACP certainly needs the financial support of COSATU; it cannot not survive on membership fees, and has few other donors. Its head office is situated in COSATU House, and, according to media reports, on some occasions it could not even pay its bills.

Since 2009, the SACP leadership has been part and parcel of Zuma’s ruling elite, presiding over unprecedented corruption and patronage. The party in government lobbies for populist policies that hamper growth and finds itself unable to oppose unrealistic populist demands. SACP ministers were part of the government responsible for the Marikana massacre of striking workers in August and September 2012. None of them resigned, nor even protested, no doubt because of the party’s closeness to the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), a COSATU affiliate and the main rival of the striking workers’ organization, the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union.<sup>184</sup>

The party has returned to the fold of the ANC, but this time, unlike in exile, it appears like the ANC has “*caught*” the party rather than the other way around. The SACP has begun to distance itself from the most egregious instances of ANC corruption, but not from Zuma. Despite the fissures, the coalition continues to march forward. The ANC need the party to serve as its

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<sup>182</sup> Davidson, *Yuzhnaia Afrika*; Allison Drew, *Between Empire and the Revolution: A Life of Sidney Bunting, 1873–1936* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007); Stephen Clingman, *Bram Fischer: Afrikaner Revolutionary* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1998); and O’Malley and Gevisser, *Dream Deferred*.

<sup>183</sup> Karis and Carter, *From Protest; The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Vol. 1 (1960–1970)* (South African Democracy Education Trust, Cape Town: Zed Press, 2004).

<sup>184</sup> Davidson et al., *South Africa, Vol. 1 and II*; Mandela, *Long Walk*; and Ray Alexander-Simons, *All My Life*; Ronnie Kasrils, *Armed and Dangerous: From Undercover Struggle to Freedom* (Johannesburg: Heinemann Educational Publishers, 1993);

revolutionary front.<sup>185</sup> It needs COSATU as testimony to its proletarian character and as voting fodder. Both the SACP and COSATU need the ANC, or rather the government, for patronage in the shape of jobs, contracts, and salary rises. If the ANC falls, its allies will fall too.

## 2.16 Conclusion

However, the allure of communist ideology persisted in South Africa. During the fight, the SACP and ANC developed populist expectations that did not go away. Neither party did anything to dispel them—in fact, each new ANC administration made even more ridiculous promises. In 2013, a new political group called the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) arose with similar slogans: a National Democratic Revolution, the Freedom Charter, land expropriation, and nationalization of all mines, businesses, and banks. After only eight months of campaigning, the EFF received 6.35 percent of the vote and twenty-five parliamentary seats in the 2014 elections. It was perhaps too late for the SACP to go it alone in the face of such a powerful left-wing competitor.

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<sup>185</sup> Thomas G. Karis and Gail M. Gerhart, eds., *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, 1882–1990*, Vol. 5: *Nadir and Resurgence, 1964–1979* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997).

## CHAPTER THREE:

### PARTY ORGANS AND DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM

#### 3.1 Introduction

The founding of the CPSA in 1921 marked a watershed moment in South African labour politics. Until the 1920s, the organized labour movement was primarily, but not solely, made up of members of the White working class. Around one thousand six hundred (1600) of the CPSA's one thousand seven hundred and fifty (1750) members were black by 1928.<sup>186</sup> It is no secret that the SACP is the most stable and ideologically coherent of the several constituents that make up the ANC-led alliance. This is evidenced by the rapid and historically unparalleled expansion of party membership, which stands at almost 240,000 members. It's no coincidence that right-wing media outlets are increasingly complaining about the SACP's growing influence in government and inside the Alliance.<sup>187</sup>

The Communist Party of South Africa is a member of the global Communist movement. It is said to be attending meetings of fraternal Communist and Workers' Parties and follows their decisions with zeal. True to the ideas of working-class internationalism, the Party strives for global unity among workers, particularly among Marxist-Leninist parties.<sup>188</sup> The Party strives for the global solidarity of all anti-imperialist and rational forces in the life-or-death struggle against a horrific nuclear war, for the peaceful cohabitation of states at all stages of development, and for universal and full disarmament. This strategy is argued to be in line with the fundamental interests of the country's citizens. It is consistent with South Africa's independence and integrity, as well as all-African collaboration and togetherness.

#### 3.2 Aims and Guiding Principles

The aims or purposes of the SACP, contained in its Constitution enjoin the SACP to:

Strive to be the most powerful political force representing the interests of the South African working class in the struggle to advance, deepen, and protect the national democratic revolution and establish socialism;

Educate, organize, and mobilize the working class and its supporters in support of the SACP and its goals of completing the national democratic revolution and achieving socialism;

Strive for democratic recognition as a vanguard while competing ideologically with other political parties;

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<sup>186</sup> Mia Roth, *The Communist Party in South Africa: Racism, Eurocentricity and Moscow, 1921–1950* (n.p.: Partridge, 2016).

<sup>187</sup> Blade Nzimande, 'Consolidate Our Revolutionary Advances, Roll Back neo-liberalism and its anti-majoritarian agenda' Towards SACP 3rd National Special Congress, 2015

<sup>188</sup> Mia Roth, *The Communist Party in South Africa: Racism, Eurocentricity and Moscow, 1921–1950* (n.p.: Partridge, 2016).

Build a communist society in which all forms of individual exploitation are abolished and all the fruits of human labour are distributed according to necessity; achieving such a society will necessitate an interim socialist formation in which reward is based on contribution;

Commit to a social order that fully respects all sections of our society's cultural, linguistic, and religious rights, as well as the individual's democratic rights; the SACP will recognize the right to independence of all social organizations and political parties that operate within the scope of South Africa's Constitution; this implies a multi-party political framework with regular, open, and free elections. The SACP will focus on furthering the interests of the working class and its supporters in democratic contests with other political groups in all aspects of life within such a framework.<sup>189</sup>

Marxism-Leninism is the underlying philosophy of the SACP. Guided by this philosophical approach, the SACP's political programme is concerned with:

*Ending South Africa's capitalist exploitation system and constructing a socialist society based on shared ownership, participation in, and control of the key means of production by the producers;*

*Organizing, teaching, and leading the working class in the socialist revolution, as well as the more immediate goals of protecting and extending the national democratic revolution and achieving national and social emancipation; the main aim of the unfolding national democratic revolution is to complete the national liberation of the African people in particular and black people in general, to ensure the destruction of the legacy of white supremacy, and the strengthening of democracy in every sphere of life; by participating in this revolution, the SACP aims to eradicate patriarchal relations, weaken and ultimately destroy the economic and political power of the capitalist class through struggle for working class hegemony over society, in particular the ownership and control of the economy and the achievement of one united state of people's power; in this state, working class interests will be dominant and the economic conditions will be created which make it possible to move towards social emancipation and eventually, the total abolition of the exploitation of person by person in both public and private spheres of life;*

*Organizing, educating, and leading women in the working class, the impoverished, and rural areas in pursuit of the SACP's goals; and raising workers' and allies' awareness of the integral and oppressive nature of gender relations within South African capitalism;*

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<sup>189</sup> Nzimande, B. 2011b. Building working class hegemony through the forthcoming local government elections. Umsebenzi Online,10(5), 2 March.

*Playing a key role in strengthening the revolutionary alliance of all classes and strata whose interests are served by the immediate aims of the national democratic revolution;*

*Spreading the widest possible understanding of our basic ideology and its application to South African conditions, particularly among the working class;*

*Combating racism, tribalism, sex discrimination, regionalism, chauvinism and all forms of narrow nationalism;*

*Encouraging an ongoing national and international dialogue with all organisations committed to peace, transformation of gender relations, non-racialism, democracy and the preservation of our environment; and*

*Promoting the ideas of proletarian internationalism and the unity of the workers of South Africa and the world.<sup>190</sup>*

### **3.3 Basic Organisational Principles**

In order to secure the unity and cohesion of the SACP, the SACP Constitution obliges members to defend the SACP and to carry out its decisions. All decisions taken by higher structures are binding on all lower structures and individual members. Members have the right to pursue their views internally in the lead up to conferences or congresses with powers under the SACP's constitution to determine or reverse SACP policies. No groupings with their own discipline are permitted.<sup>191</sup>

All higher structures are accountable to lower structures and to the membership in the formulation and implementation of policies and, for this purpose, wherever possible ensures regular and effective consultation with lower structures and the membership prior to the finalisation and implementation of major policies. All elected office bearers of the SACP and all its structures are elected by secret ballot unless a minimum of 75% of the delegates decide otherwise and have the power to formulate and direct SACP policies at any level.<sup>192</sup>

Members who are active in fraternal organisations (such as the ANC or COSATU), or in any sector of the mass movement have a duty to set an example of loyalty, hard work and zeal in the performance of their duties. These members are furthermore bound by the discipline and

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<sup>190</sup> Nzimande, B. 2006. What is the National Democratic Revolution? <http://www.sacp.org.za/main.php?ID=1850> Dates of access: 11 Mar. 2012, 3 Jul. 2012.

<sup>191</sup> Priestland, D. 2009. The red flag: a history of communism. New York: Grove. Public Service Commission see South Africa. Public Service Commission.

<sup>192</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 1962. The road to South African Liberation, p.11.

decisions of such organisations and movement.<sup>193</sup> They are not permitted to create or participate in SACP caucuses within such organisations and movements designed to influence either elections or policies.

The advocacy of SACP policy on any question relating to the internal affairs of any such organisations or movements is by open public statements or at joint meetings between representatives of the SACP and such organisations or movements. It is the duty of delegates to fairly and effectively convey to Congress and policymaking conferences the mandate of the constituency that elected them.<sup>194</sup>

However, delegates attending such Congresses and conferences are not rigidly bound by these mandates and may discuss and vote on the basis of debates at such Congresses and conferences.

Employees of the SACP may not serve as elected members of the party's constitutional structures at the same level at which they are employed, but they may serve in an advisory capacity. They may serve on and be elected to SACP structures at lower levels. If an employee of the SACP is elected to a position in the SACP as an office bearer at the same level, he/she must relinquish his/her original position as an employee of the SACP within a month of being elected.<sup>195</sup>

All structures of the SACP are encouraged to practice constructive criticism and self-criticism in party structures. In all work and at every level, party structures and members ensure that the struggle against patriarchy and for the transformation of gender relations is given due importance, including by the creation of appropriate structures empowered to perform this task. At least one third of all executives of the SACP from branch level to the Central Committee are reserved for women.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 1989. The path to power: programme of the South African Communist Party as adopted at the Seventh Congress, 1989.

<sup>194</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2007a. 12th National Congress Resolutions: communists to the front to build a better socialist world. <http://www.sacp.org.za/main.php?ID=3111> Date of access: 2 Jul. 2018.

<sup>195</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2007b. The South African road to socialism: building working class hegemony, for a socialist orientated National Democratic Revolution. <http://www.sacp.org.za/main.php?include=docs/conf/2007/political.html> Dates of access: 23 Jan. 2012, 5 Jul. 2018, 5 Aug. 2018.

<sup>196</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2011b. 13th International Meeting of the Communist and Workers' Parties: Socialism is the future. <http://www.sacp.org.za/main.php?ID=3554> Date of access: 12 Jan. 2012.

Executive structures of the SACP have the right to co-opt SACP veterans, who have non-voting status. Veterans are those who have served the party with distinction for 40 years and more. Ex-officio members of SACP structures do not exercise a vote in those structures.<sup>197</sup>

### *3.3.1 Young Communist League (YCL)*

The Young Communist League (YCL) comprises people from 14 to 35 years old who support the goals, policies and programmes of the SACP. The YCL is the autonomous youth organisation of the SACP.<sup>198</sup>

While the YCL takes its own decisions and shape its own policies and programmes, these are not in conflict with the major policies and programmes of the SACP. If necessary, the CC shall, after consultation with the YCL, adopt guidelines to give practical effect to ensure synergy between the policies and programmes of the YCL with that of the SACP.<sup>199</sup>

## **3.4 Decision-Making**

### *3.4.1 National Congress*

The highest authority of the SACP is the National Congress which meets every five years. The Central Committee (CC) may convene other Special National Congresses which have the same power as the main National Congress except for the provisions relating to the election of office bearers and members of the CC. A Special National Congress may however, decide on elections of office bearers by a 75% majority.<sup>200</sup> A Special National Congress is convened by the CC if directed to do so by a decision of more than half of the SACP provinces.

The National Congress is constituted by elected delegates from the membership and directly elected and co-opted CC members. All SACP provinces are represented in proportion to their membership in branches. The CC is responsible to, prior to each National Congress, determine the total number of elected delegates and to allocate a quota to each province in proportion to its membership as organized in branches. The provinces in turn allocate a quota of delegates from the Provincial Executive Committee (PEC) and for each branch in proportion to its

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<sup>197</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2011c. Communist cadres in all fronts and terrains of struggle to build people's power for socialism. <http://www.sacp.org.za/docs/sp/2011/sp0822.html> Date of access: 13 Jan. 2012.

<sup>198</sup> Nzimande, B. 2008. Class, Ideological and Mass Struggles Post-Polokwane. Umsebenzi Online. Vol 7. No 1. 16 January.

<sup>199</sup> Kuye, J.O. and Cedras, J.P. 2011. Dialogue between the ANC, COSATU and the SACP: The Impact on leadership, governance and public policy in South Africa. African Journal of Public Affairs, Vol 4(3). pp 73 - 84. African Consortium of Public Administration

<sup>200</sup> Nzimande, B. 2000. "Speech to Memorial Service on the Anniversary of Joe Slovo's death". January 30. Unpublished Mimeograph.

membership ensuring that each branch has a minimum of one representative.<sup>201</sup> The CC decides on the number of voting delegates that the YCL is entitled to. The CC has the authority to invite non-voting delegates made up of veterans and similar categories. With the permission of the National Congress such delegates may attend and participate in all closed sessions. A Special National Congress may be constituted on similar lines as a National Congress.

The National Congress discusses the reports of the CC, receives and discusses the audited financial statement and the report of the National Treasurer, examines and decides the policies of the SACP, and is the only authority with the power to elect the General Secretary, National Chairperson, National Treasurer, Deputy General Secretary, Deputy National Chairperson, and members of the CC.<sup>202</sup> The Central Committee ensures that all major draft documents for the consideration of the National Congress are circulated to all structures at least two months prior to the Congress. All comments, resolutions and proposals on such documents are tabled at the National Congress.

Plenary proceedings of the National Congress are in open session, unless otherwise decided by the Congress. All decisions of the National Congress are taken by a simple majority through a show of hands.<sup>203</sup>

### *3.4.2 The Central Committee (CC)*

The Central Committee (CC) directs the work of the SACP, determines all matters related to policy, issues binding instructions and directives to all levels of the SACP. Any departure from major policy decisions of the National Congress demanded by changing conditions will only be made after full consultation with the membership.<sup>204</sup>

The CC consists of thirty (30) members elected at the National Congress and comprises the General Secretary, National Chairperson, National Treasurer, Deputy General Secretary (First, and since the 2012 National Congress also a Second Deputy General Secretary), Deputy National Chairperson, and, in addition to those directly elected, the Secretaries and

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<sup>201</sup> SACP. 2012. "Advance and Deepen Working Class Power and Hegemony in all key sites of struggle". The South African Road to Socialism: Draft Political Programme of the SACP 2012 — 2017.

<sup>202</sup> SACP Constitution; Priestland, D. 2009. *The red flag: a history of communism*. New York: Grove. Public Service Commission see South Africa. Public Service Commission.

<sup>203</sup> Radebe, J. 2012. Statement by the Head of the ANC NEC Policy Sub-Committee on the Release of Policy Discussion Documents. 05 March. <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=9418>.

<sup>204</sup> Priestland, D. 2009. *The red flag: a history of communism*. New York: Grove. Public Service Commission see South Africa. Public Service Commission.

Chairpersons of all the provinces, who, together with the national secretary and national chairperson of the YCL, are ex officio members.<sup>205</sup> Any Provincial Secretary or Chairperson elected to the CC in his/her own right forfeits his/her position on the PEC.

The CC has the right to co-opt five members, apart from veterans. The CC includes at least one-third women in its make-up, including after co-option. All nominations for the elected members of the CC are submitted by provinces to the CC not later than two weeks before the National Congress. Nominations from the floor of the Congress are accepted if seconded by a minimum of 25% of Congress delegates.<sup>206</sup> Only a person who has been a member in good standing in the SACP for more than five years is eligible for election to the CC.

The CC meets at least every four months in plenary session and is responsible for drafting major political reports for consideration by plenary session of the CC; deciding who will be the fulltime members of the CC; ensuring that all elected office bearers, CC members, provincial committees, other party structures and members carry out their duties effectively; controlling and supervising all national SACP media and setting up the necessary structures for their effective functioning; stimulating and providing a flow of education in Marxist theory and its application to the country's conditions for all SACP members, and promoting cadre development; informing and guiding the membership on current political developments and also providing regular information on SACP organisational activities; representing the SACP nationally in its relations with other political parties and organisations; managing and controlling all SACP property and funds; has the right by a two-thirds majority (excluding the comrade affected) to remove or suspend any of its members from serving on the CC for any serious misconduct detrimental to the SACP with the proviso that any such actions are reported to the membership; and appointing from among its members, the heads of departments.<sup>207</sup>

All CC members are furthermore obliged to attend all CC meetings or tender written apologies. Elected CC members are obliged to work within a Department of the SACP as deployed by the CC. Failure to participate in the work of the Department is reported to the CC by the Head of Department.

### 3.4.3 Political Bureau (PB)

The CC, through the consensus of at least 60% of the CC, appoints from its ranks eleven members, who together with the elected office bearers, constitutes the PB. At least seven of the additional PB members are appointed to specific portfolios including organizing, fund-raising,

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<sup>205</sup> SACP Constitution; SACP. 2012. "Advance and Deepen Working Class Power and Hegemony in all key sites of struggle". The South African Road to Socialism: Draft Political Programme of the SACP 2012 — 2017.

<sup>206</sup> Nzimande, B. 2000. "Towards a Socialist South Africa", Mail and Guardian, February 18-24.

<sup>207</sup> Nzimande, B. 2000. "Towards a Socialist South Africa", Mail and Guardian, February 18-24.

political education and international relations.<sup>208</sup> If there is consensus on the appointments, the CC elects the eleven additional members of the PB through a secret ballot. The national secretary of the YCL is an ex-officio member of the PB.

The PB conducts the current work of the SACP and exercises all the powers and functions of the CC between meetings of the CC, except those powers and functions which are specifically reserved for plenary sessions of the CC.<sup>209</sup>

The PB meets at least once a month. It establishes whatever administrative structures it deems necessary to facilitate the carrying out of its decisions between meetings of the PB. The CC constantly assesses and evaluates the work of the PB, and where necessary, recalls members of the PB. Any member of the CC may, by invitation of the PB, attend any of its meetings.<sup>210</sup>

The PB has the right by a two-thirds majority decision (excluding the comrade affected) to suspend any comrade from the PB for any serious misconduct detrimental to the SACP. Such a decision is enforced until the next plenary session of the CC which either confirms or reverses the PB decision.<sup>211</sup>

#### *3.4.4 National Office Bearers and their Responsibilities*

##### 3.4.4.1 General Secretary

The General Secretary is the leading National Office Bearer of the SACP and a full-time official under conditions of service determined by the CC. The General Secretary is an ex officio member of all party structures and his/her responsibilities include keeping (or cause to be kept) the minutes of all CC and PB meetings and such other books, records and archives as may be required; attending to the correspondence of the CC and PB; maintaining regular personal and written contact with all the provinces and keeping the membership informed of the work of the CC and PB; ensuring that members of the CC are kept informed of the work of the PB in between meetings of the CC; and drawing up (or cause to be drawn up) all reports and documents as may be decided upon by the CC or PB.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> SACP Constitution; SACP, 1999. "June 2 Elections, A platform for accelerated transformation, The African Communist, Second Quarter.

<sup>209</sup> Nzimande, B. 2011b. Building working class hegemony through the forthcoming local government elections. Umsebenzi Online,10(5), 2 Mar.

<sup>210</sup> SACP Constitution; SACP, 1999. "June 2 Elections, A platform for accelerated transformation, The African Communist, Second Quarter.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> Nzimande, B. 2011b. Building working class hegemony through the forthcoming local government elections. Umsebenzi Online,10(5), 2 Mar.

#### 3.4.4.2 Deputy General Secretary

The Deputy General Secretary, as directed by the CC, deputises for the General Secretary in respect of all the functions set out for the General Secretary.

#### 3.4.4.3 National Chairperson

The National Chairperson ranks after the General Secretary as a national office bearer of the SACP and is an *ex officio* member of all party structures. The National Chairperson is responsible for presiding at all meetings of the CC and PB in conformity with the constitution and other rules and procedures adopted by these bodies; and has a deliberative vote only.<sup>213</sup>

#### 3.4.4.4 Deputy National Chairperson

The Deputy National Chairperson, as directed by the CC, deputises for the National Chairperson in respect of all the functions set out for the National Chairperson.

#### 3.4.4.5 National Treasurer

Responsibilities of the National Treasurer include taking all necessary measures to ensure that the SACP is provided with sufficient means to carry out its political and organisational tasks; disposing of such funds as the CC authorises by general or specific mandate; keeping safe and administering all the property and monies of the SACP; keeping such books and accounts as will clearly record and reflect the financial position of the SACP and submit statements of income and expenditure to the CC and PB at intervals to be determined by the CC and PB; presenting audited financial statements and written financial reports to the Congress; and convening a Finance Committee appointed by the CC.<sup>214</sup>

### **3.5 The SACP and the Zuma Administration**

#### *3.5.1 The 12<sup>th</sup> National Congress (2007)*

From 11-15 July 2007, the SACP held its 12<sup>th</sup> National Congress. Not insignificant was that this congress was held five months before the crucial 52<sup>nd</sup> National Conference of the ANC. Of importance at the SACP conference was its analysis, understanding and resolutions pertaining to state power and the nature of state power.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> SACP, 1999. "June 2 Elections, A platform for accelerated transformation, The African Communist, Second Quarter.

<sup>215</sup> SACP. 2012. "Advance and Deepen Working Class Power and Hegemony in all key sites of struggle". The South African Road to Socialism: Draft Political Programme of the SACP 2012 — 2017.

For the SACP, the question of state power was the central question to any revolution. It perceived the locus of state power as being in diverse sites, including the executive, the legislatures, the judiciary, security forces, the broad public sector, state owned enterprises, and other public institutions.<sup>216</sup> The SACP's own strategic Medium Term Vision (MTV) is to secure working class hegemony in the State in its diversity and in all other sites of power.

The Party viewed electoral politics as an important, but not an exclusive terrain for the contestation of state power. In addition to electoral politics, the power of the working class in the state was related to working class power in all other sites, including the imperative of developing organs of popular power, active forms of participatory democracy and social mobilisation.<sup>217</sup> At this congress, the SACP critiqued the dysfunctional state of the Alliance with particular reference to policy making, the lack of joint programmes on the ground, deployments and electoral list processes.

The SACP believed that significant transformation of the state was needed including redressing the damaging impact of privatisation and restructuring policies that have weakened the capacity of the state and exposed key strategic areas to the dominance of private capital; addressing the lack of a clear cadre development policy in the state; building the strategic capacity of the state to drive developmental programmes; rebuilding critical sectors of the public service, including health care and education, that were still reeling from the effects of years of down-sizing and other restructuring measures; and transforming the key area of local government, often the weakest sphere of governance.<sup>218</sup>

In terms of SACP members who were deployed as ANC elected representatives, or as public servants, the SACP believed that these members were expected to continue to owe allegiance to the Party and conduct themselves in ways that are in line with the fundamental policies, principles and values of the SACP.<sup>219</sup> Given the issue of dual membership, this posed a potential conflict if not political dissonance for those finding themselves in these situations. The point has been made elsewhere in this study that there are no SACP or COSATU members of Parliament, but only ANC members as far as the Alliance is concerned. The ANC contests elections as leader of the Alliance.

In regard to the Alliance (at least in so far as it was in 2007), the belief of the SACP was that the Alliance required major reconfiguration if the NDR was to be advanced, deepened and defended.<sup>220</sup> In the mind of the SACP, the reconfiguration of the Alliance necessitated it to be

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<sup>216</sup> Musgrave, A. 2005. "Zuma's Popularity Like a 'Tsunami'". *Mai/ and Guardian Online*, 07 March.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>218</sup> Pillay, D. 2008. Working Class or Populism: The Meaning of Zuma for the Left in South Africa. *Amandla!* 12-13.

<sup>219</sup> Thomas, D.P. The South African Communist Party (SACP) in the Post-apartheid Period. *Review of African Political Economy*. Volume 34, Issue 11. *Debates on the Left in Southern Africa*. Canada: University of Victoria, 2007.

<sup>220</sup> Tom Lodge, "Secret Party: South African Communists between 1950 and 1960", *South African Historical Journal* Vol. 67, Iss. 4, 2015

the strategic political centre from which common capacity to drive strategy, broad policy, campaigns, deployment and accountability would be developed whilst simultaneously respecting the independent role and strategic tasks of each of the Alliance partners.

In 2007, the SACP recognised the need to deepen its capacity to provide strategic leadership in regard to key policy sites of state power, including industrial policy, social policies and the safety, security and defence sectors. It furthermore seriously considered contesting state power in elections in the context of a reconfigured Alliance. In this regard, it mandated the newly-elected Central Committee to actively pursue the different potential modalities of future SACP electoral campaigning, *inter alia*, an electoral pact with Alliance partners (ANC and COSATU).<sup>221</sup> This could include agreement on deployments, possible quotas, the accountability of elected representatives including accountability of SACP cadres to the Party, the election manifesto, and the importance of an independent face and role for the SACP and its cadres within legislatures; or independent electoral lists on the voters' roll with the possible objective of constituting a coalition Alliance agreement after elections.

### 3.5.2 *The SACP National Congress (2009)*

The SACP's Special National Congress held in Polokwane in December 2009 outlined three broad strategic tasks, building on and aligned to the momentum of the ANC's 52<sup>nd</sup> National Congress of 2007. The discussion below sets out key ideas emanating from this conference.<sup>222</sup>

The global capitalist crisis was defined as a crisis that has deepened the plight and suffering of billions of workers and the poor world-wide. In South Africa a million working people have lost their jobs in the course of 2009 alone. The strategic imperative was to exploit this crisis in consolidating support for the SACP and its Allies. One of the outcomes of the crisis was a greater reliance of capital on the state for bail-outs, rescue packages and protective interventions.<sup>223</sup> The SACP undertook to use this greater reliance of capitalists on the state to organise and mobilise in places of work, in communities, inside the state itself in order to ensure that it was not the workers and poor who bear the brunt of the economic crisis.

The SACP saw itself as being obligated to respond to what it termed as the appalling levels of racialised inequality, and the crisis levels of unemployment — this after 15 years of democracy, and more than a decade of economic growth, notwithstanding progress on many fronts.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> Irina Filatova and Apollon Davidson, *The Hidden Thread: Russia and South Africa in the Soviet Era* (Johannesburg & Cape Town: Jonathan Ball, 2013)

<sup>222</sup> Business Report. 2009. South Africa has widest gap between rich and poor, 28 September.

<sup>223</sup> Calbert, G. 2009. *An Approach to Modelling and Inference Based on Axelrod's Using Model of Alliance Formation*. 18th World IMACS / MODSIM Congress, Cairns, Australia 13-17 July.

<sup>224</sup> SACP. 2012. "Advance and Deepen Working Class Power and Hegemony in all key sites of struggle". *The South African Road to Socialism: Draft Political Programme of the SACP 2012 — 2017*.

Patriarchal oppression continued to afflict millions of women. It identified the underlying systemic features in South African society that reproduced the crisis of under-development.

It committed to placing the economy onto a different, job-creating path; advancing a state-led and worker-driven industrial policy and ensuring that macro-economic policy was aligned with strategic developmental priorities as agreed to with Alliance partners.<sup>225</sup> The commitment extended and aligned with the ANC Polokwane resolutions on rural development, fighting corruption, implementing a NHI system, investing in education and training and empowering women.

The SACP furthermore perceived itself as having the task to carry forward the analysis of progress and challenges within the SACP, and within the broader ANC-led Alliance. It recognised the important gains made in consolidating the unity in the Alliance, but also alerted itself to what it termed as the early warning signs of a small, but sometimes clamorous anti-communist, chauvinistic tendency in the ranks of the broader Alliance movement.<sup>226</sup> It committed to fight factionalism, not with factionalism, but with a principled programme of action.

### *3.5.3 Discussions towards the SACP 13th National Congress*

For its 13<sup>th</sup> National Congress in July 2012, the SACP released a discussion document on 21 May 2012 (see [www.sacp.org.za](http://www.sacp.org.za)) analysing the state and state power with a focus on looking back in an attempt to understand and work within the contradictions of the present. When the ANC assumed power in 1994, it inherited a state apparatus that was thoroughly distorted by its internal colonial and apartheid features and immediately set out to transform this.<sup>227</sup>

The white minority was serviced by a relatively well-functioning, but authoritarian and rigidly hierarchical state bureaucracy that created welfare systemic conditions for this category of citizen. From the 1930s, the white minority state started to develop a number of major stateowned enterprises in key strategic areas like the energy sector (Eskom), iron and steel sector (Isacor), telecommunications sector (Telkom), petrochemical sector (SASOL), railway sector (Spoornet), and the defence industry (Armcor).<sup>228</sup>

However, from the late 1970s, the financial crisis and growing class differences within the ruling white minority union led to the privatization of key strategic parastatals (SASOL, Isacor), and to the radical reduction on public expenditure on others (for example, Spoornet). This was

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<sup>225</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2009. Building working class hegemony on the terrain of the national democratic struggle.

<sup>226</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2009. Building working class hegemony on the terrain of the national democratic struggle.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

in fact a form of financial austerity measures being implemented in South Africa.<sup>229</sup> Consequentially, when the new democratic state assumed power in 1994, it found a state deprived both of key strategic apparatuses as a result of the privatisation that started in the 1970s and a seriously under-capitalised passenger and freight rail and ports system.

1994 also led to the integration of what was an extensive, ethnically fragmented set of former Bantustan, township, "*Coloured*" and "*Indian*" bureaucracies. In 1994, the new state inherited almost six-hundred-and-fifty-thousand (650 000) former Bantustan bureaucrats. While there were dedicated professionals among them, the dominant ethos in the Bantustan and tri-cameral bureaucracies could be described as one characterised by patronage and rent-seeking.<sup>230</sup> This legacy continues to leave a powerful and perverse imprint on South Africa's contemporary reality. Provinces that incorporated former Bantustan bureaucracies are often those with the most serious administrative challenges in the present for example the Eastern Cape, Northwest and Limpopo.

### 3.6 New Public Management

According to the SACP, part of the persistence of the perversities of the current problems in the state has been the result of seeking to transform the state and its administrative apparatus through the application of the neo-liberal aligned "new public management" approach.<sup>231</sup>

For the SACP, "new public management" was applying (misapplying?) a private, for-profit, corporate management approach to the public sector, inter alia:

- Replacing a public sector ethics of service to citizens with a managerialist ethics of "delivery" to "customers".
- Replacing professional leadership of the public sector with generic corporate managers presupposing that auditing and financial skills were all that was required to run a hospital or a school, for instance.
- Replacing professional and vocational incentives in the public sector with monetary incentives that are in turn typically based on fulfilment of "performance agreements" that are often meaningless, and that frequently result in tick-box pseudo-compliance.
- Fragmenting line departments into dozens of stand-alone "agencies", each with its own "corporate" structure - a board, a CEO, and an expensive head office (what the SACP has referred to as the "agentification" of the state).
- Transforming the public administration from a "doing" apparatus into a "purchaser" of services from the private sector. Professionals in the state apparatus, those that have remained, have been increasingly reduced to compilers and adjudicators of

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<sup>229</sup> Priestland, D. 2009. *The red flag: a history of communism*. New York: Grove. Public Service Commission see South Africa. Public Service Commission.

<sup>230</sup> Ellis, S. *External Mission: The ANC in Exile, 1960-1990* (Cape Town, Jonathon Ball Publishers: 2012).

<sup>231</sup> Nzimande, B. 2011c. Skills development: a site of class struggle for dissent work. *Umzebenzi online*, 10(14), 6 Jul.

"tenders" with all of the moral hazard implicit in this (the SACP has described this as the "tenderization" of the state).<sup>232</sup>

A number of developed economies like the UK, Australia, Canada and New Zealand implemented the "new public management" approach with considerable zeal from the late 1970s through the 1980s and early 1990s. It was seen as a means to "right-size" welfare states that were deemed by conservative governments to be "bloated" and "inefficient". Increasingly, throughout the 1990s in these very countries that had pioneered the approach, the many problems associated with it were beginning to show serious signs of fragmentation of the state apparatus. Since the 1990s various attempts have been made in these countries to rebuild "joined-up" government.<sup>233</sup>

At the time of these growing criticisms of the "new public management" approach, the post1994 South African state tended to uncritically adopt it as the solution to transform South Africa's inherited public sector legacy. The uncritical adoption of this approach did not take into account the dysfunctional state of South Africa in 1994 insofar as public administration was concerned.<sup>234</sup> The democratically-elected government did not inherit a unitary, professional, relatively efficient, rule-governed, and comprehensive welfare state. The material conditions at the time dictated the necessity for an approach different to that promoted by new public management.

To this toxic mix of a bad legacy and a poor remedy was added the (in principle progressive and necessary) implementation of affirmative action measures to ensure equitable race, gender and disability representation in the public sector. However, since these affirmative action measures were introduced into a poorly conceived neo-liberal restructuring of the public sector, over-laid sometimes with factional ruling party appointments, they have often resulted in poor outcomes which then get blamed on affirmative action itself.<sup>235</sup> The focus for the SACP is on building a more effective, strategically disciplined, democratic developmental state.

### 3.7 Conclusion

The SACP's organization was founded on democratic centralism ideas. It upheld the principles of democratic election of all leading organs of the Party, collective leadership, and full debate

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<sup>232</sup> Balibar, E. and Wallerstein, I. (eds), *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (London, New York: Verso, 1991).

<sup>233</sup> Adams, S. *Comrade Minister. The South African Communist Party and the Transition from Apartheid to Democracy*. Huntington, NY: Nova Science, 2001.

<sup>234</sup> Nzimande, B. 2011c. Skills development: a site of class struggle for dissent work. *Umzebenzi online*, 10(14), 6 Jul.

<sup>235</sup> Adams, S. *Comrade Minister. The South African Communist Party and the Transition from Apartheid to Democracy*. Huntington, NY: Nova Science, 2001.

of policy while demanding strict discipline, subordination of a minority to the majority, and lower Party organs to higher organs, as well as the prohibition of all factions within the Party.

Under illegal conditions, some components of democratic procedure had to be curtailed; this transitory position had to be compensated for by all members, who saw it as their duty to participate in policy creation, and by the leadership, who encouraged and enabled them to do so.

## CHAPTER FOUR:

### THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

#### 4.1 Introduction

Definitions of revolutions vary; Trotsky for instance speaks of a permanent revolution that he defines as follows:

*“First it embraces the problem of the transition from the democratic revolution to the socialist. The second aspect of the permanent theory has to do with the socialist revolution as such. For an indefinitely long time and in constant internal struggle, all social relations undergo transformation. Viewed from this stand point, a national revolution is not a self-contained whole: it is only a link in the international chain. The international revolution constitutes a permanent process, despite temporary declines and ebbs”.*<sup>236</sup>

Mao echoes some of the stoic, phlegmatic practicality of Trotsky when he defines his version of revolution as:

*“The national revolutionary struggle of the Chinese people has a history of fully one hundred years counting from the Opium War of 1840, or of thirty years counting from the Revolution of 1911. It has not yet run its full course, nor has it yet performed its tasks with any signal of success; therefore the Chinese people, and above all the Communist Party, must shoulder the responsibility of resolutely fighting on”.*<sup>237</sup>

Another perhaps less pragmatic approach, yet also emphasising history, is described by Nzimande:

*“As we go into the local government elections it is absolutely important that we remind ourselves of the best of the best of the Congress revolutionary traditions and responsibilities placed on us. As Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela, Chris Hani, and many of our men*

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<sup>236</sup> Legassick, M. ‘The Past and Present Role of the Marxist Workers’ Tendency of the ANC’ in Liebenberg, I. et al (eds), *The Long March: The Story of the Struggle for Liberation in South Africa* (Pretoria: HAUM, 1994), pp. 173186.

<sup>237</sup> Zedong, M. 2009c. *Collected writings of Chairman Mao, Volume 3: On policy, practice and contradiction*. El Paso TX: El Paso Norte.; Zedong, M. 2009b. *Collected writings of Chairman Mao, Volume 2: Guerrilla warfare*. El Paso TX: El Paso Norte.

*and women leaders, have said, ours was never a struggle to replace the white elite with a black elite. Nor was our struggle to replace a white capitalist class with simply a black capitalist class. Instead, our struggle was for the total destruction of all the conditions and instruments of oppression of one group over another. These words...captured the essence of the national democratic revolution...they were true yesterday, as they are true today, and shall remain relevant for a long time to come".<sup>238</sup>*

The Communist Party's historic mission was to abolish capitalism and achieve a classless Communist society through socialist transformation of the country's economy. However, at a time when the majority of the population was subjected to the most heinous and degrading forms of national oppression, when White colonialist reaction imposed a state of terror on the entire population and sacrificed people's living standards on the altar of White supremacy, the Communist Party's central and immediate task was to lead the fight for non-white national liberation and democratic revolution victory.<sup>264</sup>

Members of the Party worked tirelessly to strengthen the trade union movement, the African National Congress, and other popular organizations. The Party rose to become the greatest champion of the downtrodden and working people in every struggle against exploitation and national oppression, while being despised, slandered, and persecuted by the ruling classes.<sup>239</sup> The South African Communist Party is the heir to the tradition established by the Communist Party of South Africa, combining legal mass activity with illegal work to build the Marxist-Leninist Party as the disciplined spearhead of the fight for freedom, democracy, peace, and socialism.

#### **4.2 The Vanguard Role of the Communist Party**

According to the SACP, the oppressed and democratic forces lead by the revolutionary movement will topple apartheid colonialism. In many years of intricate and tough battle, our movement has matured, gained experience, and become steered.<sup>240</sup> The African National Congress, according to the SACP, is in the forefront of the national democratic movement. The African National Congress (ANC) was founded in 1962 to bring African people together in the fight against colonial oppression.

Since then, it has grown to represent and lead all oppressed and democratic forces in armed resistance. Despite many years of illegal and underground existence, the ANC now holds a

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<sup>238</sup> Nzimande, B. 2011b. Building working class hegemony through the forthcoming local government elections. Umsebenzi Online,10(5), 2 Mar.

<sup>239</sup> Marx, K. and Engels, F. The Communist Manifesto (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969).

<sup>240</sup> Priestland, D. 2009. The red flag: a history of communism. New York: Grove. Public Service Commission see South Africa. Public Service Commission.

largely uncontested position as the popular vanguard force in the liberation movement as the head of the revolutionary coalition. The overwhelming majority of the struggling masses have pledged their allegiance and support to it.

The African National Congress (ANC) does not represent a particular social class or philosophy. The ANC welcomes individuals from whatever class who support and are willing to fight for the goals of the Freedom Charter into its ranks as the head of the liberation coalition and chief representative of all the downtrodden.<sup>241</sup> Our folks are workers in the vast majority and in the most strategic positions. As a result, the ANC acknowledges the working class's leadership role. Workers' participation in the democratic revolution is one of the most essential ways in which our working class participates.

On the other side, the African National Congress (ANC) is not a labour-led political party. The labour union movement is another significant organized component of democratic forces. A trade union is the working class's primary mass organization. It must be as broad as feasible in order to achieve its goal, and it must strive to keep its legal public position. It must bring all workers, regardless of political consciousness, together on an industrial level.<sup>242</sup> A labour union, on the other hand, must be involved in political struggles. Everywhere, the capitalist state acts to protect the bosses. It makes advantage of its authority to oppress employees and their unions. It goes to great lengths to uphold capitalism.

Workers all across the world have learned from experience that trade unions cannot stay out of bigger political conflicts. In South Africa, where racism and capitalism are two sides of the same coin, it is even more crystal clear that a trade union cannot stand aside from the liberation struggle. The organised involvement of trade unions in the revolutionary struggle helps reinforce the dominant role of workers as a class.

However, this does not rule out the possibility of a trade union movement serving as a workers' vanguard party. In fact, a labour union's core character precludes it from fulfilling this job.<sup>269</sup> Workers, political leadership must represent the working class in its interactions with other social classes and the state.

Workers' participation in all kinds of struggle, armed and unarmed, above-board and underground, mass and vanguard, must be ensured through the political party of the working class. These functions cannot be fully performed by a trade union movement. It would be annihilated if it attempted to do so.

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<sup>241</sup> Pike, H. P. A History of Communism in South Africa (Germiston: Christian Mission International of South Africa, 1988).

<sup>242</sup> Nzimande, B. 2011a. Address of the SACP General Secretary to the 5th Central Committee of COSATU. <sup>269</sup>  
 Russel, B. 1949. The practice and theory of Bolshevism. London: George Allen and Unwin.

### 4.3 Strengthening Mass Democratic Organisations

In South African conditions, a workers' vanguard political party must be made up of the most tried and tested representatives of this class. Its members must be committed revolutionaries with an understanding of Marxist theory and practice, an unconditional dedication to the workers' cause, and a readiness, if need be, to sacrifice their very lives in the cause of freedom and socialism.<sup>243</sup>

A Communist Party does not earn the honoured title of vanguard merely by proclaiming it. Nor does its claim to be the upholder and custodian of Marxism-Leninism give it a monopoly of political wisdom or a natural right to exclusive control of the struggle. At each stage of its political life, guided by a correct application of Marxist revolutionary theory, a Party must win its place by its superior efforts of leadership and its devotion to the revolutionary cause.<sup>244</sup>

The SACP works consistently to forge the South African working class into a powerful force, capable of playing the leading role in the struggle for national democracy and in carrying out its historic mission of abolishing exploitation and creating a classless society. The Party strives to spread the widest possible understanding of the ideology of Marxism-Leninism, particularly in its application to South African conditions. Its strategy and tactics consist in transforming the immediate struggles of the working class into an organised, class-conscious offensive against oppression and capital.<sup>245</sup>

Through all developments and turns of events, the Communist Party always holds before the workers their long-term objective: the creation of a communist society. At the same time, the Party always links this long-term objective to the actual struggles of the immediate situation. It strives to forge and strengthen the broad alliance of oppressed and democratic South Africans for the attainment of national democracy on the path to the final goal.

The SACP plays its role both as an independent organisation and as part of the revolutionary alliance headed by the African National Congress. There is no contradiction between the multiclass leadership role of the ANC, and the working class vanguard role of the Party.<sup>246</sup> Both the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party have an important role to play individually and collectively for the attainment of national democracy. These organisations share common objectives and agree on strategy and all the key tactics in the National Democratic Revolution. Within this alliance, the Party works tirelessly to strengthen the liberation movement, deepen its revolutionary nationalism and ensure thoroughgoing revolutionary democratic transformations.<sup>247</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 1962. The road to South African freedom.

<sup>244</sup> Russel, B. 1949. The practice and theory of Bolshevism. London: George Allen and Unwin.

<sup>245</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 1962. The road to South African freedom.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

Despite the unending onslaught on this revolutionary alliance by the apartheid regime, by imperialism and by other reactionary forces, the alliance has grown stronger. It has done so precisely because the respective organisations are a natural product of the struggles of our people, and they represent their deepest aspirations. Communists have never sought to transform the national democratic movement into a front for the Party.<sup>248</sup> Participation by communists in the ANC, Umkhonto we Sizwe and other revolutionary organisations is based on our class appreciation of their distinct but complementary tasks. As part of this alliance, it is a vital task of the South African Communist Party to see to the widest possible organisation and mobilisation of the mass of the South African people into an active force to defeat the colonial regime.<sup>249</sup>

The Party therefore works tirelessly to strengthen and develop mass democratic organisations. Over the years, particularly in the 1980s, there has been a resurgence of mass democratic organisation and militant mass struggles.<sup>250</sup> It is a tribute to the correctness of the strategic line of the ANC, the Party and the South African Congress of Trade Unions, that these forces have adopted the national democratic programme and act to realise it. Despite intense state repression the mass democratic movement has not only survived, but continues to play the central role in the mass struggles.

#### **4.4 The Mass Democratic Movement**

The emergence and development of the giant democratic trade union movement is one of the greatest achievements of the South African working class in recent years. Within this movement, South African Communists strive for maximum unity in action around the day-to-day demands of the workers, and for the attainment of national liberation and socialism.<sup>278</sup> The organisation and mobilisation of workers into one non-racial, democratic federation shall always be our guiding principle. In this effort, it is important to win over white workers into the ranks of the democratic movement.

The South African Communist Party works actively among other sectors of the oppressed and democratic forces. The emergence and growth of sectorial mass democratic organisations, and their organisational and political unity, has had a profound impact on the South African political scene.<sup>251</sup> The Party works for united and purposeful action among all these sectors for the eradication of oppression and exploitation. These sectors do not stand apart from the

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<sup>248</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 1989. The path to power: programme of the South African Communist Party as adopted at the Seventh Congress, 1989.

<sup>249</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2007a. 12th National Congress Resolutions: communists to the front to build a better socialist world.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

<sup>251</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2007b. The South African road to socialism: building working class hegemony, for a socialist orientated National Democratic Revolution

working class; they are composed mainly of individuals who are themselves workers, or who have a working class background.

In the case of the majority of South African women, they suffer from triple oppression as women, as blacks and as workers. Women cannot change the immediate conditions of their lives without fighting shoulder to shoulder with their brothers against colonialism and exploitation for a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa. Forced removals, Bantustans and the migratory labour system are some of the key features of this system which tear families apart and trap black women into bearing the heaviest burden of oppression.<sup>252</sup> At the workplace, women are subjected to various forms of discrimination. Yet all this is compounded and reinforced by subjective practices and attitudes within the male dominated society.

The South African Communist Party struggles to ensure that the disadvantages suffered by the majority of South African women are eliminated in the context of the democratic struggle. This includes fighting sexism within the ranks of the party and the broad liberation movement.<sup>253</sup> In the long term, an advance to socialism a society in which resources are, in a planned and purposeful manner, dedicated to overcome sexist oppression is in the interest of all South African women.

The system of national oppression and capitalist exploitation blocks and frustrates at every turn the aspirations and energies of our young people. For the black youth of our country, there is a serious lack of employment, educational opportunities and of sport and cultural facilities. It is against this background that the South African youth have displayed courage and militancy in many mass battles and within the ranks of Umkhonto we Sizwe.<sup>254</sup> The Communist Party considers it a crucial task to constantly give strategic direction and theoretical depth to the militancy of the youth, in pursuit of national democratic and socialist tasks.

Millions of South Africans, including black workers, subscribe to various religious beliefs. The South African ruling class and its allies, like oppressors elsewhere in the world, have always tried to use religion as a tool to instil passivity and resignation among the working masses. With the development of the liberation struggle there has emerged an interpretation of religious doctrines which is in the interest of the struggling people. Moved by a profound rejection of oppression, countless religious leaders and believers have taken up the battle against the colonial system.<sup>255</sup> Many are to be found within the ranks of the liberation

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<sup>252</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2007a. 12th National Congress Resolutions: communists to the front to build a better socialist world.

<sup>253</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2007b. The South African road to socialism: building working class hegemony, for a socialist orientated National Democratic Revolution

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

<sup>255</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2007a. 12th National Congress Resolutions: communists to the front to build a better socialist world.

movement and the people's army. The ideology of the South African Communist Party is based on scientific materialism. But recognition is on the right of all people to adopt and practice religious beliefs of their choice. The SACP work for the involvement of all antiapartheid forces in the common struggle for freedom and democracy. There is common ground between the immediate and long term perspectives of the Party and a theology of liberation that identifies with the poor and oppressed. In actual struggle, this bond has grown and must be further strengthened.

Black cultural workers and sportspersons have endured vicious discrimination under a system designed precisely to stifle the all-round development of blacks. The regime has always trampled upon the culture of the majority. It has not spared its arsenal of repression in acting against the democratic cultural workers who portray and promote the struggles and aspirations of the people.<sup>256</sup> The oppression and repression suffered by artists and sportspersons lie in the very system of colonialism which is based on the all-round subjugation of the majority of the people. The emergent and developing popular movement in culture and sport in which the working class is playing a vital role forms an important part of the liberation struggle. The Communist Party attaches central importance to work in these spheres. Militant struggle in these spheres helps to weld our people into a united, democratic nation.<sup>257</sup> We regard culture and sport as important instruments in forging the working class into a victorious force against capital.

All of these sectors, drawn together into the mass democratic movement, are the organised mass contingent of our national liberation struggle. The mass democratic movement, together with the vanguard liberation alliance, constitute the front of revolutionary forces.<sup>258</sup>

At the same time, more and more forces which do not belong to the vanguard and mass democratic movements, are increasingly identifying with some of their democratic objectives. These forces must find a place in the broader antiapartheid front. There can be no valid '*revolutionary*' reason for excluding from such a broad front any grouping which supports and is prepared to act for the attainment of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa on the basis of one-person, one vote.<sup>259</sup>

The crucial question is whether an alliance or a joint platform will help to weaken the main enemy and advance the people's cause. As long as the revolutionary core does not abandon its independent role and does not dilute its own fundamental objectives, there is no danger

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<sup>256</sup> Russel, B. 1949. The practice and theory of Bolshevism. London: George Allen and Unwin.

<sup>257</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2011b. 13th International Meeting of the Communist and Workers' Parties: Socialism is the future.

<sup>258</sup> Stephen Ellis, "Nelson Mandela, the South African Communist Party and the origins of Umkhonto we Sizwe", Cold War History Vol. 16 , Iss. 1,2016

<sup>259</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2011b. 13th International Meeting of the Communist and Workers' Parties: Socialism is the future.

whatsoever in acting with such broader forces for change.<sup>260</sup> South African Communists always strive for the strengthening of the revolutionary front for national liberation, the continuous building of a coalition of anti-apartheid forces, and the unity of Communists and non-communist in the struggle for national democracy.

#### 4.5 The Path to Power in the NDR

The path to power lied with the South African masses. In recent years they have shown their immense resilience and strength. Nothing which the regime unleashed against the oppressed or their organisations broke their morale or dampened their combative spirit. The harnessing of this mass political energy and the realisation of its enormous potential continued to be the dominant task of the liberation vanguard.<sup>261</sup> It is a task which requires the firm rooting of the underground, consisting of political and military formations under political leadership, and the strengthening of all organs of the mass democratic movement. The prospects of a revolutionary advance are greater today than ever before in our history. The regime continues to face an all-round crisis which can only be resolved by a qualitative transformation of the whole economic, political, social and cultural system.<sup>262</sup>

The people headed by their revolutionary vanguard advance on the road to liberation with a rich and varied tradition of struggle, both armed and unarmed. The tribally-based armed resistance to the colonial forces went on for centuries until the defeat of Bambata and his guerrillas in the Nkandla forest in 1906.<sup>263</sup> This signalled the end of a phase. The liberation organisations of our country, including our Party, were born in conditions when the core of the former resistance in the countryside had been destroyed and the new forces were not yet fully developed.

In these conditions it was imperative for the liberation organisations to pursue a strategy of militant but nonviolent methods of struggle for many decades after their foundation. But, already in the late 50's, evidence was beginning to accumulate which called for a departure from this strategy.<sup>264</sup>

All remaining possibilities of advancing the struggle through exclusively nonviolent means were, one by one, being blocked. A growing number among the oppressed sensed (perhaps sooner than some of their leaders) that a change had come about in the objective conditions of struggle. The strategy of nonviolence and passive defiance were being questioned by more

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<sup>260</sup> Ibid.

<sup>261</sup> Stephen Ellis, "Nelson Mandela, the South African Communist Party and the origins of Umkhonto we Sizwe", *Cold War History* Vol. 16, Iss. 1, 2016

<sup>262</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2007b. The South African road to socialism: building working class hegemony, for a socialist orientated National Democratic Revolution.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid.

<sup>264</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2008. The SACP and state power: the alliance post-Polokwane – ready to govern? Information bulletin for the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party, 7(1).

and more militants.<sup>265</sup> Our working people, through their own experience, no longer saw much point in nonviolent protest alone in the face of escalating state savagery and were beginning to show a readiness to accept the sacrifices involved in the new methods.

The slogan of '*non-violence*' had thus become harmful to the cause of our revolution in the new phase of struggle. It disarmed the people in the face of the savage assaults of the oppressor and dampened their militancy. The movement was obliged to respond. The time was clearly ripe to combine mass political action with armed struggle.

#### 4.6 A New Strategic Line

In response to this situation, the SACP's main strategic line in the struggle for people's power was radically reshaped in the middle of 1961. Joint measures were taken by the ANC and the Party to create MK as the armed wing of the liberation movement. Although there was no possibility of successfully challenging the enemy in armed combat, action could not be postponed.<sup>266</sup> It became vital to demonstrate an organised alternative to unplanned and suicidal outbursts which were beginning to take place. It was also necessary to make an open break with the politics of nonviolent protest which had dominated the strategy of the previous half century and which had unavoidably bred an ideology of pacifism among many leaders of the liberation movement. That open break was symbolised by the national sabotage campaign launched on December 16th, 1961.<sup>267</sup>

This new approach did not imply that all nonviolent methods of struggle had now become useless or impossible. Nor did it imply a retreat from agitation, organisational and educational work among the masses. The SACP, in its 1962 Programme, continued to advocate the use of all forms of struggle by the people, including non-collaboration, strikes, boycotts and demonstrations.<sup>268</sup> It also placed prime emphasis on the need to make underground structures and illegal work more effective, more efficient and more successful in reaching the masses of the people and evading repressive action by the authorities.

The adoption of armed struggle as an important part of the political struggle brought our movement into uncharted territory. We were unpractised in the art, techniques and skills of military organisation and combat, and lacked solid experience of clandestine work. Apart from these subjective weaknesses we had to contend with a number of unique and complex objective difficulties.<sup>269</sup> In contrast to armed liberation struggles in the rest of the African continent, some of the conditions in which the SACP had to implement its new approach were particularly disadvantageous:

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<sup>265</sup> Ibid.

<sup>266</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 1962. The road to South African freedom

<sup>267</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2008. The SACP and state power: the alliance post-Polokwane – ready to govern? Information bulletin for the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party, 7(1).

<sup>268</sup> Ibid.

<sup>269</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2012a. The battle of ideas. Umsebenzi online, 11(22), 14 Jun

- Ø South Africa's special form of colonial subjugation had withheld all military knowhow from the subject peoples and prevented any black person from being in possession or using any modern weapon or other instruments of war. Effective training could, therefore, only take place externally. The long-term escalation of armed activity depended, in the first place, on the return of trainees and a minimum of weaponry.
- Ø In 87 per cent of the land there is no black peasantry and the rural working population is forced to live under conditions of the strictest control on the dispersed white farms. This reduces considerably the social bases which are needed for the survival, growth and manoeuvre of guerrilla and other combat formations in the rural areas.
- Ø No effective rear base was available externally to facilitate the flow of either personnel or logistical material. South Africa was completely surrounded by a barrier of imperialist controlled territories hostile to the liberation struggle, which deprived us of a friendly border.
- Ø Our terrain lacks any extensive areas of classical guerrilla terrain.
- Ø Most of the first crop of militants who went for training in the early 60's had been known activists from the legal period. This would make their return for political and military tasks especially problematic.
- Ø The regime was in command of a highly centralised state apparatus, including well-organized instruments of repression, powerful and highly mobile armed forces and a sophisticated communications network, anchored on a powerful economic base.<sup>270</sup>

Despite these complexities and disadvantages, history left the SACP with no option but to engage in armed action as a necessary part of the political struggle. It was a moment in which (to use Lenin's words) '*untimely inaction would have been worse than untimely action*'.<sup>271</sup>

Thus, the SACP had to venture forth even at the expense of risking a degree of disorganisation. We could not refuse to fight. We had to learn how to do so. And, in many respects, it had to learn on the ground, in the hard school of revolutionary practice. In the process, a combination of inexperience, lapses in security and breaches of conspiracy rules, enabled the enemy to deal massive blows against the whole underground.<sup>272</sup> Party heroes were among those who made enormous sacrifices in their courageous attempt to keep the underground going and to carry on with armed activities. Despite these efforts, within a few years of the enemy's Rivonia breakthrough, the underground ceased to exist in any organised form.<sup>273</sup> Leading ANC and

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<sup>270</sup> Stephen Ellis, "Nelson Mandela, the South African Communist Party and the origins of Umkhonto we Sizwe", Cold War History Vol. 16, Iss. 1, 2016

<sup>271</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2012a. The battle of ideas. Umsebenzi online, 11(22), 14 Jun

<sup>272</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2009. Building working class hegemony on the terrain of the national democratic struggle.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid.

Party cadres who were abroad on political and military missions reconstituted themselves as leadership collectives and, over time, took steps to help re-establish the movement's internal presence.

The task of rebuilding the shattered internal structures and rekindling the fire of organised struggle proved to be long and arduous. Undaunted by long spells in the enemy's gaols, many ANC and Party veterans attempted to organise political life, immediately on being released. In addition, in the late 60s, the Party's external leadership organised propaganda units to spread the message of the movement once again. Leaflet bombs, street broadcasts, internal cyclostyled journals, made an appearance at a time when signs of political life were at their lowest.<sup>274</sup> Many of the brave Party activists who pioneered this work were arrested, tortured, imprisoned and murdered.

But in general, for some years after Rivonia, a demoralising silence had descended upon the political arena. There could, however, be no retreat from the decision to combine armed with non-armed activity; indeed, the massive onslaught on all expressions of black resistance underlined even further the inadequacy of a policy which did not include preparation for armed activity.<sup>275</sup> The hundreds of ANC and Party cadres who had been sent abroad for training were, by 1965, both ready and anxious to go back home to pursue the liberation movement's politico military objectives.

The unending attempts to advance these objectives in the next decade or more met with major difficulties. The pre-Rivonia political base made possible the launching of armed activities. With its destruction such activities could neither be sustained nor raised to a higher level. It was considered that armed activity was essential in order to help recreate the very conditions in which political structures could be developed. At the same time, without such political foundations, armed activity itself could not advance beyond a certain point.<sup>276</sup> We were thus forced to find ways of hitting the enemy at a time of relative weakness in the area of internal political organisation. Armed actions would play a role in helping to create the conditions which would enable us to remedy this weakness.

But in trying to carry this out, there developed a tendency to focus too exclusively on military activities. We did not always pay sufficient attention or devote the necessary resources to political work itself. We acted as if armed activity would somehow, on its own, spontaneously generate political organisation and mobilisation. And it took some time before attention was given to the balance between these two aspects of our struggle.

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<sup>274</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2007b. The South African road to socialism: building working class hegemony, for a socialist orientated National Democratic Revolution.

<sup>275</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 1989. The path to power: programme of the South African Communist Party as adopted at the Seventh Congress, 1989.

<sup>276</sup> Priestland, D. 2009. The red flag: a history of communism. New York: Grove. Public Service Commission see South Africa. Public Service Commission

These tendencies grew during the many years of relative political lull when armed blows seemed to be the only way of keeping the embers of resistance alive. Even when attention began to be paid to the direct task of building the underground and spreading agitation and educational propaganda, the process was, at times, infected with a lack of coordination between the political and military structures. This undoubtedly held back both the political and military objectives of our struggle.<sup>277</sup>

Despite unending efforts, it was not until the post-Soweto (1976) period that it became possible to successfully deploy armed combat groups whose activities have grown from year to year. There were some failures and weaknesses. But the unbroken efforts which the movement was seen to be making to challenge the enemy, even during the darker moments, made an indelible impact on the people.

MK's reputation grew. It became widely acknowledged as the fighting instrument of the oppressed, who were inspired by its cadres' ethos of "never surrender" and militant courage. Above all, the capability exhibited by MK's armed challenge helped, more than any other reason, to overcome a sense of helplessness in the face of a mighty foe who had monopolized all contemporary weapons of war for so long. Armed operations played a significant role in fostering a climate conducive to political renewal.<sup>278</sup> The impact of a strategy that involved organized revolutionary violence is, in no small part, to blame for the acute crisis that South Africa's ruling class is facing. Popular mass actions, on the other hand, began with student and worker activities in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and helped to lay the groundwork for the advent of persistent armed combat actions.

#### **4.7 Approach to Armed Conflict**

So, what is the SACP's current strategy for armed struggle? The liberation alliance's military plan must take into account the specific objective situations in South Africa. We mentioned a number of challenges we faced when we began the path of armed conflict. The lack of an extensive area of classic guerrilla terrain; the absence of a black peasantry in most of the countryside; the separation of residential areas between whites and blacks; the lack of friendly borders; the enemy's great mobility and firepower; an army whose main contingent benefits from the system of colonial oppression; and imperialist support for the South African government are just a few of the challenges we face.<sup>279</sup> Furthermore, the South African regime has considerably strengthened its military capacity and refined its counterinsurgency methods over the last two decades, based on an advanced capitalist basis.

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<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

<sup>278</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 1989. The path to power: programme of the South African Communist Party as adopted at the Seventh Congress, 1989.

<sup>279</sup> Priestland, D. 2009. The red flag: a history of communism. New York: Grove. Public Service Commission see South Africa. Public Service Commission

The people and their vanguard liberation movement, on the other hand, have a number of strategic advantages in terms of military combat.

- Ø The oppressed, who form the social foundation for armed conflict, outnumber the opponent both numerically and morally. We are fighting a just war that has the international community's full support.
- Ø The colonial regime, despite its vast resources, is located in a conflict zone. While this may make the opponent more obstinate, popular activities have a direct impact on the enemy's operating base.
- Ø The six-million-strong army of black workers holds a position within the economy that allows it to strike the entire system with strategic military blows. Apartheid's economic basis and infrastructure are sophisticated and complex, making them very vulnerable to sabotage and other attacks.
- Ø The people have a high level of political awareness and a long history of militant conflicts in both the city and the countryside, which occasionally erupt into partial uprisings. They're led by a vanguard liberation movement with a wealth of experience and a thorough understanding of revolutionary ideology.
- Ø The regime's increased reliance on black community recruits, particularly in the bantustans, creates stronger opportunities for us to undercut the racist state machinery from inside.
- Ø Apartheid's worldwide isolation is growing. South Africa contributes to the regime's economic and social foundations being weakened.<sup>280</sup>

Given the enemy's military might, we must engage in a continuous armed conflict that gradually saps the enemy's power over a relatively long period of time. However, given the aforementioned objective constraints, ours cannot be a traditional guerrilla war in which the primary goal is to liberate more and more territory over time. There are also no urgent plans to defeat the enemy militarily on all fronts. Our armed battle must rely on those who are actively fighting.<sup>309</sup> The working class, in particular, has enormous potential for taking the struggle to apartheid colonialism's nerve centers. People create the conditions for armed struggle to take root through mass action. Guerrillas can better survive, operate, and work among the people in these situations.<sup>281</sup> Popular uprisings have resulted in the creation of mass revolutionary bases in a number of townships and villages, providing a reliable and secure terrain for combatants to operate.

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<sup>280</sup> Nzimande, B. 2011a. Address of the SACP General Secretary to the 5th Central Committee of COSATU. Priestland, D. 2009. *The red flag: a history of communism*. New York: Grove. Public Service Commission see South Africa. Public Service Commission.

<sup>281</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 1962. *The road to South African freedom*.

Many people are making courageous efforts to engage the adversary with primitive weapons in today's upheavals. Where mass engagement with the enemy becomes acute, street clashes and barricades emerge. Self-Defense Units and battle groups were formed by the youth and other sectors on their own initiative.<sup>282</sup> This lays the groundwork for the revolutionary movement to elevate mass revolt to higher levels of insurgency by popularizing armed combat skills and providing all-around leadership and direction to popular combat formations. Particular attention should be directed to the development and operation of combat groups in industrial centers and on white-owned farms as part of this mission.<sup>283</sup>

The growing atmosphere of defiance and rebellion in rural regions, especially in the Bantustans, provides fertile ground for the construction and operation of rural fighting units. This public uprising, along with the enemy's relative vulnerability in some rural areas, raises the prospect of guerrilla-style organizations surviving and operating. Armed activity, even in these places, should be closely linked to, and gradually blend with, mass activity.<sup>284</sup>

The revolutionary army of our people is made up of all forces engaged in physical confrontation and armed warfare against the enemy. Umkhonto we Sizwe, the army's core, operates in both urban and rural regions. This core must enlist the most engaged citizens, those who are willing to take up arms.<sup>285</sup> Strengthening and engaging all layers of the revolutionary army in action is a critical and ongoing task for the liberation coalition. The growth of underground structures in all locations and among all sectors of our people is critical to completing this mission. 4.8 The Military and Other Forms of Political Struggle

The theory of Marxism-Leninism, the experience of earlier revolutionary movements, and, most all, our own particular realities inform our approach to the link between military and other kinds of political struggle. We Communists think that the struggle must always be shaped to fit the specific political context.<sup>286</sup> This position decides whether revolutionary change can be realized through military or non-military effort, or a combination of both. A choice to include violence as part of the political battle does not automatically imply that the military conflict has taken precedence or that victory will be achieved solely through the use of firearms.<sup>316</sup>

Organized combat activity is unquestionably still an important component of our revolutionary transformation plan. The racist state was built on violence and continues to thrive on it. It will not be destroyed or surrendered without a revolutionary assault on all fronts.

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<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

<sup>283</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 1989. The path to power: programme of the South African Communist Party as adopted at the Seventh Congress, 1989.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid.

<sup>285</sup> Priestland, D. 2009. The red flag: a history of communism. New York: Grove. Public Service Commission see South Africa. Public Service Commission.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid. <sup>316</sup>

Ibid.

In order to assist establish conditions in which People's Power may be achieved, a combination of expanding political upsurge and escalating armed struggle is clearly necessary.<sup>287</sup> Organized armed activity remains one of the most significant causes contributing to the regime's problems.

However, as the ANC's Kabwe conference in 1985 emphasized, military activities cannot increase considerably in scale or quality without a well-organized underground linked to mass political revolutionary bases throughout the country, in both rural and urban areas. A national and local mass movement, led by an internal underground political leadership with structures in all of the main cities and at the point of production, is a prerequisite for taking the armed struggle to new heights.<sup>318</sup> This does not mean that armed action against the adversary should be postponed until we have improved our organizational capabilities. The balance between political and military activity must be reflected in all aspects of our planning, as well as how we allocate our energy and resources. The requirement for specialized struggle organs must not be permitted to weaken political leadership in all parts of the struggle.<sup>288</sup> The demands of the political fight must drive organized combat activity. It must be crafted to diminish the enemy's grasp on power while bolstering political mobilization, organization, and resistance.

#### 4.9 Seizure of Power

The situation has the potential for the formation of conditions that allow for the seizure of power to occur quite quickly. However, we cannot be dogmatic about the precise timing and manner of such a breakthrough. Only through combining and interplaying objective and subjective components can the circumstances for a revolutionary change arise. To put it another way, it will be determined not just by what we do, but also by what the adversary does; it will be determined not only by our strength, but also by the enemy's weakness.<sup>289</sup>

The development of nationwide popular ferment, resistance, all levels of organization, and the existence of people's combat formations are all important on a subjective level. At the objective level, it is a weakening of the adversary caused by events such as a severe economic downturn, increased foreign anti-race actions, major vacillations and divisions within the power bloc's ranks, self-wounding enemy initiatives, and so on.<sup>290</sup> The subsequent crisis will signify the prospect of a revolutionary transition when both subjective and objective factors combine, when mass activity is at its peak and adversary divisions and vacillations are at their peak.

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<sup>287</sup> Stephen Ellis, "Nelson Mandela, the South African Communist Party and the origins of Umkhonto we Sizwe", *Cold War History* Vol. 16, Iss. 1, 2016 <sup>318</sup> Ibid.

<sup>288</sup> Russel, B. 1949. *The practice and theory of Bolshevism*. London: George Allen and Unwin.

<sup>289</sup> Pike, H. P. *A History of Communism in South Africa* (Germiston: Christian Mission International of South Africa, 1988).

<sup>290</sup> Legassick, M. 'Review: Science and South Africanism': White 'self-identity' or white class and race domination?', *Kronos*, Vol. 33 (November, 2007), pp. 245-258.

However, the emergence of a crisis, no matter how severe, will not result in the defeat of the enemy and the victory of the people. Only if the revolutionary movement has properly created the requisite political and organizational forces with the capacity to launch an offensive for power takeover at the appropriate time will power be seized.<sup>291</sup> This raises the question of how we view insurgency as a possible path to people's power.

In contrast to a coup, an insurgency is a mass revolutionary upsurge of the people in conditions that allow for the takeover of power. In the same way that a coup lends itself to blueprinting, it does not lend itself to blueprinting. Only if and when a definite revolutionary moment has evolved can the appeal for an insurgency be placed on the immediate agenda of struggle.<sup>292</sup> However, even if an insurrectionary 'moment' is not yet imminent, the work of establishing proper preparations for it must be prioritized.

An act of revolutionary force is an insurgency. It isn't necessarily an armed uprising, though. Even if the armed aspect is absent or subordinate, an all-around civic movement could lead to an insurgency. Both forms of insurgencies have been successful in the past.<sup>293</sup> Historical examples can be illuminating, but they cannot offer the SACP with a precise model. The party must, at the end of the day, discover its own path.

So, can we speak of an insurgency as a way of acquiring power in any sense? A combination of mass upsurge, in which working class action at the point of production will play a key role, mass defiance, escalating revolutionary combat activity, increased international pressure, ungovernability, a deteriorating economy, growing demoralization, division, vacillation, and confusion within the power bloc will exacerbate the crisis facing our ruling class. When all of these factors come together in a significant enough way, the imminent potential of an insurgency will emerge. Of course, such a situation will not develop on its own; it will rely, first and foremost, on the revolutionary movement's efforts. However, we must also be prepared for a reasonably quick change in the circumstances.<sup>294</sup> *'Events sparked by the tiniest disagreements, seemingly remote from the real breeding ground of revolution'* might evolve into a revolutionary turning point overnight in times of escalating crisis (Lenin).

The regime's grip on power might be reduced quickly, setting the foundation for a protracted national movement leading to an insurgency-style takeover. The political and military subjective forces must be built up so that when the seeds of revolution begin to germinate, the vanguard can grab the historic moment.<sup>295</sup> In this view, all-encompassing mass action, combined with organized and armed activities directed by a well-organized underground, as

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<sup>291</sup> Ibid.

<sup>292</sup> Israel, M. and Adams, S. 'That Spells Trouble: Jews and the Communist Party of South Africa', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (March, 2000), pp. 145-162.

<sup>293</sup> Russel, B. 1949. *The practice and theory of Bolshevism*. London: George Allen and Unwin.

<sup>294</sup> Nzimande, B. 2011b. Building working class hegemony through the forthcoming local government elections. *Umsebenzi Online*,10(5), 2 Mar.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid.

well as international pressure, are the keys to preparing for the takeover of power. The seizure of power will be the result of an intensifying and progressive fusion of mass political and military conflict, which is likely to end in an insurgency.

The revolutionary movement must establish itself in the best possible position to prepare and lead an insurgency at the appropriate time. This entails, among other things, focusing on the formation of factory, urban, and rural combat units, popularizing insurgent tactics among the masses, and capturing components of the enemy's armed forces.<sup>296</sup> Participatory uprisings, which have become a feature of current mass battles, must also be viewed as a school for gaining insurgent experience.

Prolonged nationwide strikes and other industrial activity at the point of production will be a critical aspect in the maturation of the "*revolutionary moment*."<sup>297</sup> Above all, at this critical juncture, a political vanguard is required to prepare and lead the insurgency.

#### 4.10 Prospects of a Negotiated Transfer of Power

There is no contradiction between this insurgent viewpoint and the possibility of a negotiated power transfer. There should be no conflation between the approach required to assist establish the conditions for power to be won and the precise shape of the ultimate breakthrough. As though they were mutually exclusive categories, armed conflict cannot be countered with discourse, negotiation, and justifiable compromise. Liberation fights have rarely concluded with the enemy's military troops unconditionally surrendering.<sup>298</sup> Every such fight on our continent has come to a head at the bargaining table, with sacrifices occasionally made in the name of revolutionary progress.

Whether there is an armed takeover of power or a negotiated settlement, the development of the revolution's political and military powers is unquestionable in both cases. We must remain vigilant against our ruling class's and its imperialist partners' evident goal of preventing a revolutionary transformation through negotiation. The imperialists seek their own brand of transformation, one that goes beyond the current regime's reform boundaries while also thwarting the struggles of the people's basic goals.<sup>299</sup> They intend to accomplish this by forcing the liberation movement into negotiations before it is strong enough on the ground to back its basic demands.

Whatever future opportunities for a negotiated transition may emerge, they must not be permitted to contaminate the purpose and content of our current strategic efforts. We are not in a fight whose sole goal is to put enough pressure on the other side to have them come to the

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<sup>296</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 1989. The path to power: programme of the South African Communist Party as adopted at the Seventh Congress, 1989.

<sup>297</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 1962. The road to South African freedom.

<sup>298</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 1989. The path to power: programme of the South African Communist Party as adopted at the Seventh Congress, 1989.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid.

bargaining table.<sup>300</sup> If, as a result of a generalized crisis and a heightened revolutionary upsurge, the liberation forces reach a point where the adversary is willing to talk, they will have to use their judgment, guided by the necessities of revolutionary progress.<sup>301</sup> But until then its sights must be clearly set on the perspectives of a seizure of power.

#### 4.11 The Enemy Armed Forces

It is improbable that the enemy forces will defect in great numbers to the side of the people in the near future. It's impossible to rule out the idea of the army acting independently and seeking to impose an open military dictatorship in the face of a revolution. These, however, are not the only viable or unavoidable possibilities.

There are a lot of other things that could have an impact on the enemy's military's precise involvement at a pivotal historical period in the future.<sup>302</sup> This is especially true of its black population. The enemy's army and police force, as well as those in the Bantustans, are becoming increasingly black. It is a component that can be won over to the side of their suffering countrymen and women at the correct time. The chances of making such an inroad are improving.

The SADF is mostly made up of conscripts. They represent the dominating group's class and social composition as a whole. Their own class and neighbourhood relationships are inextricably linked to the battle and its result. The army can't help but reflect all of the tensions and conflicts that arose in society as a whole during the critical time of clash. A lack of cohesion and consensus within the army over how to respond to the revolutionary uprising at this time could cause decisive action to be delayed, allowing greater room for a breakthrough.<sup>303</sup>

If the army's black component, particularly its Bantustan contingents, turns against the people, the uncertainty could escalate. A considerable minority of white SADF soldiers may be persuaded to recognize the inevitability of majority rule and seek an arrangement with revolutionary forces. Discontent is already strong among the white middle classes, from which the majority of the officer corps is drawn.<sup>304</sup> Resistance to the draft has risen dramatically among these groups in recent years.

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<sup>300</sup> Priestland, D. 2009. *The red flag: a history of communism*. New York: Grove. Public Service Commission see South Africa. Public Service Commission.

<sup>301</sup> Nzimande, B. 2011b. Building working class hegemony through the forthcoming local government elections. *Umsebenzi Online*,10(5), 2 Mar.

<sup>302</sup> Robinson, C. J. *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (London: University of North Carolina Press, 1983).

<sup>303</sup> Nzimande, B. 2011b. Building working class hegemony through the forthcoming local government elections. *Umsebenzi Online*,10(5), 2 Mar.

<sup>304</sup> Posel, D. 'The Apartheid Project, 1948-1970', in Ross R. et al (eds), *The Cambridge History of South Africa: Volume 2, 1885-1994* (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

#### 4.12 The White Community and Armed Conflict

In discussing these potential possibilities, it is important to note that the work of our revolutionary alliance and how its perspectives are seen by the white group as a whole will be one of the primary elements shaping the army's ultimate responses. The Freedom Charter's opening assertion, "*South Africa belongs to all its people, black and white,*" must continue to guide everything we say and do.<sup>305</sup> In the face of an ongoing enemy campaign of deception regarding our people's power goals, it is important to step up efforts to communicate this message. The nature of our organized combat actions and the targets chosen must also convey this message.

This strategy is in no way at odds with the choice to move combat operations into more '*white zones.*' This is necessary for a variety of reasons. These areas house the vast majority of the enemy's installations (including military and police bases and assembly sites), as well as all of the critical army and police personnel.<sup>306</sup> The adversary will be unable to concentrate all of its forces in the black ghettos if pressure is applied to these places. It will also bring the realities of the battle to the attention of those who make up the regime's core political base. Instead of pushing this support base farther into the racial laager, escalating action in these places focused at genuine, non-civilian targets will eat away at its cohesion.

#### 4.13 The Role of the Masses

South Africa's oppressed people's insurgency potential is increasing. While objective as well as subjective elements determine the '*precise time*' of power takeover, there is little doubt that what the people do, led by the liberation coalition, influences the objective factors and hastens the advent of that moment. It is precisely this subjective component that has radically changed the objective situation in the previous five years.<sup>307</sup> The extraordinary series of partial uprisings, the explosive growth of the mass democratic movement, the emergence of massive trade union organizations, escalating armed actions, and international mobilization against the regime are all interconnected processes that have altered the entire objective framework of struggle.

There is no part of the regime's dilemma, whether it is the fast deteriorating economic situation or internal conflicts and vacillations, that does not have its main roots in the soil of people's struggles.<sup>308</sup> The revolutionary breakthrough will be brought about by an all-around escalation of these battles, in tandem with and dependent on the consolidation and growth of mass and clandestine organizations.

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<sup>305</sup> Nzimande, B. 2011b. Building working class hegemony through the forthcoming local government elections. Umsebenzi Online,10(5), 2 Mar.

<sup>306</sup> Nzimande, B. 2011b. Building working class hegemony through the forthcoming local government elections. Umsebenzi Online,10(5), 2 Mar.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid.

<sup>308</sup> Priestland, D. 2009. The red flag: a history of communism. New York: Grove. Public Service Commission see South Africa. Public Service Commission.

The working class will be the driving force behind the abolition of racism and success in the national democratic revolution as a first step toward a socialist South Africa. The Communists, along with their liberation coalition brothers, sisters, and comrades, argue that they will remain at their posts as always, no matter how long the path to victory takes. The perspective of a long battle must never be abandoned.<sup>309</sup> However, we are sure that the situation contains the seeds of a dramatic change. We need to prepare and be prepared. Unity, organization, and battle are our watchwords.

#### 4.14 Colonialism of a Special-type

The South African Communist Party (SACP) had a strong grip on the African National Congress (ANC) on questions of theory, strategy and tactics of the national liberation struggle and controlled the ANC. It could be argued that the SACP produced vast reading material such as the African Communist to exert its influence in the liberation struggle through the ANC.<sup>310</sup> They contributed immensely in the drafting of the Freedom Charter which in turn shaped the political perspectives of the ANC. Joe Slovo contributed to the ANC's "Two Phase Theory" revolution for which the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) perspective was premised.

This theory and perspective logically led to the formation of the '*Mass Democratic Movement*' strategy which accommodated everybody from committed revolutionaries, moderates, reformists, opportunists, reactionaries, puppets and dissenters. Slovo argued that it is the inclusiveness of everybody and everything that makes the NDR democratic and national and therefore justifiable.<sup>311</sup> Thus, by implication, communists intentionally took the ANC and its allies through a reformist path. It could be argued that it is not for revolutionaries to do anything non-revolutionary, anti-socialist and liberal in orientation and character for the sake of convenience.

The crucial contributions made by Slovo equal to the Two Stage theory and which shaped the South African anti-colonial struggle were two pieces of work, viz, '*Colonialism of a Special Type*' ( i.e. Settler Colonialism) and the 'Sunset Clause' respectively.<sup>312</sup> For an intelligible understanding of the notion of colonialism of a special type, it is imperative to state that the White ruling classes, and especially the leaders of the Nationalist Party manufactured a version of the past and present of South Africa which they systematically attempted to impose everywhere, from the schoolroom to international opinion.

According to this illustration, the early White immigrants entered an almost uninhabited land peacefully. The African population is portrayed as barbaric barbarians with no civilization,

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<sup>309</sup> Nzimande, B. 2011b. Building working class hegemony through the forthcoming local government elections. Umsebenzi Online,10(5), 2 Mar.

<sup>310</sup> O'Malley, P. 2012. Colonialism of a special type.

<sup>311</sup> Nzimande, B. 2011b. Building working class hegemony through the forthcoming local government elections. Umsebenzi Online,10(5), 2 Mar.

<sup>312</sup> O'Malley, P. 2012. Colonialism of a special type.

achievements, or history. They are shown as relative newcomers who arrived around the same time as the Whites and waged aggressive wars and raids against them. The notion is created that African habitation was always confined to the Reserves, or "Bantu Homelands," as they are now known. This account of South Africa's history is completely wrong.<sup>313</sup>

The template for the merciless colonial exploitation of the non-white peoples of our country, the seizure of their lands, and the forced harnessing of their labour power, has been set since the Dutch East India Company established the first White colony 300 years ago. The Dutch declared war on the Cape people, whom they mocked as "Hottentots," and ignored their pleas for peace and friendship. The so-called "Bushmen" were nearly wiped off. Slaves were brought in from Malaya and other places.<sup>314</sup> The interior was increasingly colonized by white people. They evicted the indigenous people from the greatest farming sites and confiscated their livestock. They subdued them via violent conquest and forced them to serve them, initially through direct slavery, then through a harsh system of pass laws and taxation.

The British capture of the Cape Colony from Holland in 1806 had no effect on this pattern. The AmaXhosa people in the Eastern Cape and the Zulu people in Natal were subjected to a horrific series of conquest battles by British colonialists. They brought in more White settlers from Britain, considerably expanding the White dominance area.<sup>315</sup> They extended British sovereignty or "Protectorates" through Bechuanaland and Basutoland, as well as beyond the Limpopo River in Mashonaland, Barotseland, and other northern territories named after the infamous adventurer and multimillionaire Cecil Rhodes, through the agency of missionaries, traders, and armed bands of adventurers.<sup>316</sup>

Under British administration, the first versions of the pass system were implemented. However, Britain, as the world's most powerful capitalist at the time, was opposed to direct chattel slavery. Slavery was abolished in the Cape Colony by law in 1836. Large groups of Boers left the Cape in protest of the law and to escape British authority, crossing into Natal, the Orange Free State, and the Transvaal. Throughout the Great Trek, the Boers waged continuous aggressive conflicts against the African tribes that they encountered everywhere.<sup>317</sup> They took over their lands, exploited their labour, and even enslaved them. They built new republics based on White supremacy and the racist premise of "*no equality in church or state.*"

Colonialist propaganda has emphasized the negative aspects of traditional African civilization, such as the low level of technological progress, illiteracy, intertribal conflicts and wars, superstitions, and poverty. Such characteristics were present in traditional African civilization,

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<sup>313</sup> Posel, D. 'The Apartheid Project, 1948-1970', in Ross R. et al (eds), *The Cambridge History of South Africa: Volume 2, 1885-1994* (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

<sup>314</sup> Ibid.

<sup>315</sup> Radebe, J. 2012. Statement by the head of the ANC NEC policy sub-committee on the release of the policy discussion document

<sup>316</sup> Pike, H. P. *A History of Communism in South Africa* (Germiston: Christian Mission International of South Africa, 1988).

<sup>317</sup> Ramphela, M. 2008. *Laying ghosts to rest*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.

as they were among all peoples throughout the age of primitive tribal economy. However, antagonistic propaganda has warped the picture. The indigenous peoples of Southern Africa had created their own culture and civilization prior to European arrival.<sup>318</sup> They mined, smelted, and fashioned iron, copper, and other metals into useful utensils. They'd created a variety of handicrafts.

Their enormous agriculture and animal breeding system was well-suited to the type of country they lived in and the equipment they had. It generated enough surplus to keep full-time specialists, smiths, doctors, and others employed. Despite its simplicity, their governance was largely democratic and popular.<sup>319</sup> The senior members of the tribe aided the hereditary chiefs in their responsibilities as lawgivers and judges, and significant decisions affecting the entire tribe were always referred to a general gathering of the people, the Tswana and Sotho Pitso, the Xhosa and Zulu Imbizo. Food and shelter were freely shared, even with strangers, because private property in land was unknown.

When the first white people arrived, they were greeted politely. When the invaders launched their unrelenting acts of armed aggression, the African people heroically fought back to protect their cattle, land, and people from enslavement.<sup>320</sup> They used spear and assegai to repel the invader's bullets from his horses and wagons. The Xhosa people, led by Nqgika, Ndlambe, Hintsa, and Makana, the Zulu people, who used Shaka's combat tactics, under Dingane, Cetshwayo, and Bambatha, the Basotho under Moshoeshoe, and the Tswana, Pedi, and other African peoples in the north, all fought back valiantly against the Boer and British invaders.<sup>321</sup>

The people of colour, too, fought heroically. Revolts erupted, and the Coloured community, led by the great Adam Kok, created the Griqua Republic as an independent state. Tribal society and a rural economy, on the other hand, could not offer the material foundation for successful battle against an enemy with a more modern economy and more lethal weapons. White missionaries and traders set the stage for military conquest through their influence and penetration.<sup>322</sup> The many African peoples' disunity impeded the formation of a common front of resistance. Moshoeshoe's foresight foresaw this possibility, and he dispatched ambassadors to the Zulu and Xhosa peoples, as well as Adam Kok, to suggest a united front. However, Moshoeshoe's great alliance proposal was ahead of its time.<sup>323</sup> The British and Boer imperialists were able to play off one tribe against another and enlist African auxiliaries again in their conquering wars against African peoples.

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<sup>318</sup> Drew, A. (ed), *South Africa's Radical Tradition: A Documentary History, Volume one: 1907-1950*

<sup>319</sup> Russel, B. 1949. *The practice and theory of Bolshevism*. London: George Allen and Unwin

<sup>320</sup> Adams, S. "What's Left? The South African Communist Party After Apartheid." *Review of African Political Economy*, 72: 237-248, 1997.

<sup>321</sup> Russel, B. 1949. *The practice and theory of Bolshevism*. London: George Allen and Unwin

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>323</sup> Adams, S. *Comrade Minister. The South African Communist Party and the Transition from Apartheid to Democracy*. Huntington, NY: Nova Science, 2001.

The discovery of diamond fields in Kimberley and goldfields in the Witwatersrand had far-reaching ramifications. Foreign visitors went to South Africa in droves. South Africa has received a large amount of investment capital from the United Kingdom and Europe. To gain complete control of the Transvaal's wealth, British imperialism attacked the two republics and, after a terrible struggle in which the Boers fought back with tremendous valour and skill, brought them under the British Empire.<sup>324</sup> The subjugation of African people under the Republics was one of the pretexts for Britain's aggression. Nonetheless, after the British triumph, the colonial status and subjugation of indigenous peoples were maintained, if not increased.

The country's ultimate rulers were now the gold mining interests. They only cared about one thing about the African: forcing him to work in the mines for a pittance. They deemed the Republics' severe colonial policies to be ideal for this goal. The poll tax and pass systems were made more aggressive. The eviction of Africans from their land was hastened.<sup>325</sup> There was no attempt to bring even the bare minimum of citizen rights to the northern colonies that had been granted to non-whites in the Cape. British imperialism and Afrikaner nationalism found common cause in the oppression, dispossession, and exploitation of non-Whites. This was the foundation for the formation of the South African Union in 1910.<sup>326</sup>

The representatives of affluent Boer farmers and imperialist mining owners collaborated in an unholy alliance to squeeze the last drop of cheap labour out of the African people, dominating the all-White parliament. The Land Act of 1913 abolished African land ownership and tenancy, with the exception of the Reserves, which were purposefully meant to be insufficient to feed the population, forcing the menfolk to work in White-owned businesses.<sup>327</sup> The state created the migrant labour contract system, which separated the wage earner from his family so that the employer would not have to pay for the worker's wife and children's upkeep. The democratic, cooperative foundations of tribal culture were shattered, and the entire African population was reduced to a powerless community of destitute peasants and underpaid forced labourers in White-controlled farms, mines, and industries.<sup>328</sup>

South Africa is a sovereign nation, not a colony. Despite this, the majority of our people do not have independence or freedom. The British surrendering of South Africa's independence in 1910 was not a win over colonialism and imperialism. It was created to further imperialism's goals. Power was passed to the White minority in South Africa, rather than the majority of the country's population. Insofar as the non-white majority was concerned, the horrors of

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<sup>324</sup> Ellis, S. *External Mission: The ANC in Exile, 1960-1990* (Cape Town, Jonathon Ball Publishers: 2012).

<sup>325</sup> Priestland, D. 2009. *The red flag: a history of communism*. New York: Grove. Public Service Commission see South Africa. Public Service Commission.

<sup>326</sup> Ellis, S. *External Mission: The ANC in Exile, 1960-1990* (Cape Town, Jonathon Ball Publishers: 2012).

<sup>327</sup> Adams, S. *Comrade Minister. The South African Communist Party and the Transition from Apartheid to Democracy*. Huntington, NY: Nova Science, 2001.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*

colonialism were sustained and strengthened..<sup>329</sup> A new form of colonialism emerged, in which the oppressive White country occupied the same area as the oppressed people and coexisted with them.

During the two world wars, a rapid process of industrialisation was set in motion. South Africa's heavy and secondary industries grew to take the lead on the continent. This procedure had a significant impact on the social structure of the country. It concentrated enormous wealth and riches in the hands of the White population's highest echelon. It transformed the economy, changing it from a purely agrarian to an industrial agricultural economy, with the greatest urban working class in Africa, primarily non-white.<sup>361</sup> The masses of non-white people, on the other hand, have not reaped the same benefits from this industrialization.

On one level, there are all the characteristics of an advanced capitalist state in the last stages of imperialism in "*White South Africa*." There are well-developed industrial monopolies, as well as the amalgamation of industrial and financial capital. The land is farmed in a capitalist manner, with wage labour and cash crops for local and international markets.<sup>330</sup> South African monopoly capitalists export capital overseas, particularly in Africa, and are strongly linked to British, US, and other foreign imperialist interests. South African imperialism goes out to encompass additional regions - South West Africa and the Protectorates - in its quest for expansion.

However, there existed all the characteristics of a colony on another level, that of "*Non-white South Africa*." The indigenous people faced tremendous national oppression, poverty and exploitation, a lack of democratic rights, and political dominance by a group that tried everything it could to emphasize and sustain its alien "European" identity.<sup>331</sup> The African Reserves demonstrated the complete lack of industry, communications, transportation, and electricity supplies that were prevalent throughout African areas under colonial authority.<sup>332</sup> The state's dependence on sheer force and fear, as well as the most backward tribal traits and institutions that were purposefully and artificially preserved, was also typical of imperialist authority. South Africa's non-white population was a colony of White South Africa.

The unique nature of the South African system was determined by the union of the worst features of imperialism and colonialism within a single national frontier, which had earned its rulers the rightful scorn and disdain of progressive and democratic people all over the world. In South Africa, all white people had advantages.

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<sup>329</sup> Ellis, S. *External Mission: The ANC in Exile, 1960-1990* (Cape Town, Jonathon Ball Publishers: 2012). <sup>361</sup>

Ibid.

<sup>330</sup> Legassick, M. 'Review: Science and South Africanism': White 'self-identity' or white class and race domination?', *Kronos*, Vol. 33 (November, 2007), pp. 245-258.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid.

<sup>332</sup> Pillay, S. 'Identity, Difference, Citizenship, Or Why I am No Longer a Non-Racialist' (paper presented to the 14th General Assembly, CODESRIA, May 2015).

The white people were the only ones with the ability to vote and be elected to parliament and local government organizations. They had monopolized practically all economic, educational, cultural, and social opportunities as a result of their privilege. This created the perception that the governing elite was made up entirely of White people.<sup>333</sup> In reality, the monopolists who owned and controlled the mines, banks and finance companies, as well as the majority of farms and large businesses, wielded real power. Seven mining financial corporations owned the gold and diamond mines, which were controlled by a small group of influential financiers.

These seven firms were inextricably related to imperialist interests in the United Kingdom and the United States. They controlled R490 million in capital investment in mining alone, and employed around 500,000 people. Furthermore, they controlled vast swaths of the manufacturing sector.<sup>334</sup> They had ties to the major banks, two of which had assets in excess of R2 billion, primarily in the form of loans to industry, commerce, and real estate. In practically every corner of the country, they held enormous swaths of fertile land and mining rights. Monopoly reigned supreme in agriculture as well. 4% of the farms covered about four tenths of the entire White-owned cropland. As a result, monopolists controlled the economy of the country in mining, industry, commerce, and agriculture.<sup>335</sup> They were also tied to state-owned monopoly capital companies like Iscor (Iron and Steel), Eskom (Electricity), and Sasol (Saudi Arabian Oil and Gas) (Petrol).

The true power in South Africa was held by these monopolists. South Africa's unique form of colonialism served, first and foremost, their interests. Low non-white salaries, poverty reserves, the compound labour system, and the importation of hundreds of thousands of contract workers from beyond South African borders, as well as pass laws, poll taxes, and strict police control of labour and movement, were all meant to keep profits high. These seven mining companies and their subsidiaries made an operating profit of over R212 million in 1961, and paid R101 million in dividends to shareholders.<sup>336</sup>

Foreign imperialist interests used South African monopolists as friends and agents. One-quarter of the capital of the seven mining financial organizations was held by foreign investors, primarily British and American. In 1958, R43 million in dividends were handed out to shareholders in other countries. Standard and Barclays, the two largest banks, were mostly controlled from the United Kingdom, while US capital investment in South Africa had

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<sup>333</sup> Ranger, T. 'The invention of tradition in colonial Africa' in Hobsbawm E. and Ranger T. (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Canto, 1992) pp. 247-262.

<sup>334</sup> Rassool, C. *The Individual, Auto/biography and History in South Africa* (PhD thesis, University of the Western Cape, 2003).

<sup>335</sup> Priestland, D. 2009. *The red flag: a history of communism*. New York: Grove. Public Service Commission see South Africa. Public Service Commission.

<sup>336</sup> Robinson, C. J. *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (London: University of North Carolina Press, 1983).

increased substantially in subsequent years, outpacing all other American investments in Africa combined.<sup>337</sup>

A coalition of local White monopoly interests in mining, manufacturing, and agriculture, as well as foreign imperialists and representatives of state monopoly capitalism, wielded effective economic dominance in South Africa. These interests were at odds with one another, as expressed in the major White political parties and groups. They did, however, have a common basis in the continuance of colonial-style subjection of non-whites.

The system of colonial dominance and thievery of the non-white masses was not in the best interests of the labourers, small farmers, middleclass, and professional components that made up the majority of the White people in the long run. White supremacy meant more and more police and military spending, putting a strain on taxpayers and diverting men and resources away from productive work.<sup>338</sup> It indicated that the poor were unable to provide a sufficient market for South African industry and agriculture. It entailed a growing number of dictatorial police state policies, as well as the abolition of civil liberties for both whites and non-whites. It meant a South Africa detested and rejected by the entire world, isolated, boycotted, and sanctioned on economic, diplomatic, cultural, and other grounds. It portends an unpredictable and frightening future.<sup>339</sup>

White supremacy was maintained by escalating government repression and violence, oppressed people's resistance, and a slow descent towards civil war. Only complete liberation of non-white peoples could create circumstances of equality and friendliness among South Africa's nations, eradicating the roots of race hatred and antagonism, which constituted the biggest threat to the White population's continued security and existence.<sup>340</sup> The majority of Whites had a deep long-term stake in the national liberation of non-whites, which would break the dominance of monopoly capitalism. Progressive and forward-thinking Whites fully supported the battle for freedom and equality of the majority of the people.

The White labourers as a whole comprised an "*aristocracy of labour*." They had received various concessions from the monopolists. They were compensated fairly well. Non-white miners got R144 per year including food and compound housing, whereas white miners got R2470. African male farm workers earned an average of R68 per year, whereas whites earned R1050.<sup>341</sup> White people had a monopoly on the highest-paying jobs and access to skilled trades.

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<sup>337</sup> Rousseau, N. 'Popular History in the 1980s: The Politics of Production' (M.A. Thesis, University of the Western Cape, 1994).

<sup>338</sup> Robinson, C. J. *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (London: University of North Carolina Press, 1983).

<sup>339</sup> Pillay, S. 'Identity, Difference, Citizenship, Or Why I am No Longer a Non-Racialist' (paper presented to the 14th General Assembly, CODESRIA, May 2015).

<sup>340</sup> Rassool, C. *The Individual, Auto/biography and History in South Africa* (PhD thesis, University of the Western Cape, 2003).

<sup>341</sup> Stubbs, S. (ed), *Steve Biko: I Write What I Like* (London: Bowerdean Press, 1978).

They were almost always placed in positions of power over non-whites. White employees' relatively good living and salary standards were, in fact, a portion of the tremendous profits earned by capitalists through the exploitation of non-whites.<sup>342</sup> The White worker, who had been indoctrinated with the belief in White supremacy, imagined himself to be a member of the ruling class and gladly served as a tool and accomplice in the perpetuation of colonialism and capitalism.

In actuality, both the White and non-white workers were exploited by the same capitalist owners of the means of production. In general, white workers' earnings were higher than those of non-whites. However, many White workers earned little more than non-white labour and struggled to maintain their families.<sup>343</sup> The instability of the capitalist system, with its frequent risks of depression, short-term employment, and unemployment, affected the White worker. The racial divide of trade unions weakened all sectors of workers in their ongoing battle with bosses for better pay, working conditions, and shorter hours. All South African workers, like workers everywhere, had a fundamental interest in unity: unity in the struggle for the working class's day-to-day interests, for the end of race discrimination and division, for a free, democratic South Africa as the only possible basis for the victory of socialism, the overthrow of the capitalist class, and the end of human exploitation.<sup>344</sup>

South Africans of indigenous African heritage accounted for more than two-thirds of the population. They were the basic population of the country and, at the same time, the biggest victims of colonialism; the most oppressed and exploited of all. They lived and worked in all sections of the country. With the demise of the tribal system, the former divisions of the African people along tribal lines, as well as their classification into chiefs and commoners, were disintegrating.<sup>345</sup> This system was designed for the past's modest, self-contained economy, which was focused on subsistence farming and shared land ownership. It had no place in the trade economy, which was built on large-scale industry and mining, as well as the farming of items for market sale. "*Divide and Rule*" became the motto of the Nationalist Party government.<sup>346</sup> It aimed to resurrect tribalism and tensions amongst tribes. Their endeavours were doomed to fail. South Africa's African people were inexorably and intentionally advancing toward the building of a single, modern nation.

Meanwhile, there were no sharp or antagonistic class distinctions among Africans. The majority of them worked in industry or agriculture as wage employees. There were no large-scale employers of labour in Africa. Professional groups, primarily teachers, did not typically earn

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<sup>342</sup> Robinson, C. J. *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (London: University of North Carolina Press, 1983).

<sup>343</sup> Stubbs, S. (ed), *Steve Biko: I Write What I Like* (London: Bowerdean Press, 1978).

<sup>344</sup> Roux, E. *Time Longer than Rope* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1964).

<sup>345</sup> Sithole, J. and Mkhize, S. 'Truth or Lies? Selective Memories, Imaginings, and Representations of Chief Albert John Luthuli in Recent Political Discourses', *History and Theory*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (Dec, 2000), pp. 69-85.

<sup>346</sup> Soske, J. 'The Impossible Concept: Settler Liberalism, Pan-Africanism, and the language of non-racialism', *African Historical Review*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (2015), pp. 1-36.

higher wages or lived in a different manner than their African counterparts.<sup>347</sup> Even the inhabitants of the Reserves, particularly the men, worked as migratory wage labourers on the mines, in agriculture, or in industry for the most of their life. The Reserves were home to one-third of Africa's population. The Transkei and Ciskei in the Cape Province were the largest of them, although there were also additional scattered territories widely separated in the other three provinces.<sup>348</sup> The Nationalist administration referred to the Reserves as the "*homelands*" of the African people, yet they were already grossly overcrowded and far too tiny to support their population of 34 million.

The majority of Africans in the reserves were not self-sufficient peasants with no land or limited income. Most males in their prime were away working for White employers to support their families and avoid starvation, leaving the farming to the elderly and womenfolk.<sup>349</sup> Soil exhaustion was caused by the Reserves' small size and congestion. Because there wasn't enough land, intensive farming, crop rotation, and scientific cattle pasturing weren't possible. The Reserves were the country's most backward and underdeveloped areas, evoking colonial Africa. They were lacking in industry, communications, and power. There was no money to invest on improvements or automation.<sup>350</sup>

The Nationalist administration was attempting to split South Africa under its absurd "Bantustan" idea. They claimed to be giving the Reserves "*independence*" and "*self-government*," renaming them "*Bantu Homelands*," in order to justify treating Africans in the remaining 87 percent of South Africa as "*aliens*" and "*temporary visitors*."<sup>351</sup>

They depicted this plan as a concession to Africans and the international community. This plan was met with contempt and indignation by Africans and other freedom-loving people. There was no basis for the Nationalists to claim any region of South Africa exclusively for Whites, either in history or in actuality. Africans lived in every region of South Africa; their labour had helped to establish its farmlands and towns, mines and industries, railways and ports; they claimed South Africa as their motherland in every way.<sup>352</sup>

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<sup>347</sup> Stoler, A. L. 'Imperial Debris: Reflections on Ruins and Ruination', *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (2008), pp. 191-219.

<sup>348</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>349</sup> Soske, J. 'The Impossible Concept: Settler Liberalism, Pan-Africanism, and the language of non-racialism', *African Historical Review*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (2015), pp. 1-36.

<sup>350</sup> Tagg, J. *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Minnesota: Minnesota University Press, 1988).

<sup>351</sup> Soske, J. 'The Impossible Concept: Settler Liberalism, Pan-Africanism, and the language of non-racialism', *African Historical Review*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (2015), pp. 1-36.

<sup>352</sup> Thomas, D.P. *The South African Communist Party (SACP) in the Post-apartheid Period. Review of African Political Economy. Volume 34, Issue 11. Debates on the Left in Southern Africa.* Canada: University of Victoria, 2007.

The "*Bantustan*" idea was not only undemocratic and incompatible with all principles of self-determination, but it was also deceptive. Despite the fact that they claimed to be giving land to Africans, they were actually taking land away from them in many situations. The Nationalist Party promised the Reserves freedom and self-government, but the so-called "*Bantustan*" ideas were both deceptive and unrealistic.<sup>353</sup> The Nationalists had no intention of granting actual independence to any non-white ethnic minority. Even if they were forced to make concessions in this direction, the Reserves' land area was too limited, their economy was too underdeveloped, and they lacked the cash to allow them to achieve true independence.

The government was aiming to impose a return to tribalism through the "*Bantu Authorities*" system, which involved utilizing chiefs who were willing to comply, depose and deporting those who resisted.<sup>354</sup> In fact, the effect hastened the disintegration of tribal structures. Chiefs who cooperated with the government had become the most despised group in the rural, relying on dictatorship and violence to impose the White authorities' rules on the unwilling people, contrary to African traditions.

The inhabitants of the Reserves were putting the government's "*Bantustan*" to the test. They were engaged in bitter conflicts with the Bantu authorities, including military conflicts. The peasant in the rural areas was not the primitive tribesman of a century ago. Thousands of people had come to work in the towns at one point or another.<sup>355</sup> They had come into contact with the trade unions' challenging viewpoint and modern organizational tactics, as well as the Congress movement and the Communist Party's. These "new peasants" had reawakened the countryside, changing the African peasantry from a conservative backwater into a potent ally of the urban working class in the fight for freedom, land, equality, and democracy.

On White-owned farms across the country, millions of agricultural labourers and labour renters were employed. These were South Africa's most exploited labourers. They toiled from dawn to dusk, without any protection from labour regulations, doing hard and arduous work for pitiful compensation.<sup>356</sup> They were given insufficient food, which was always the same and was an unhealthy diet. On most farms, their living quarters were poorer than those provided for farm animals. In various parts of South Africa, prison labour, compound labour, and other forms of forced labour were ubiquitous on farms.

African agricultural labourers were routinely subjected to physical violence by farmers and their foremen, who beat them with sjamboks, often to death. Farm labour wages were among the

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<sup>353</sup> Tom Lodge, "Secret Party: South African Communists between 1950 and 1960", *South African Historical Journal* Vol. 67, Iss. 4, 2015

<sup>354</sup> Soske, J. 'The Impossible Concept: Settler Liberalism, Pan-Africanism, and the language of non-racialism', *African Historical Review*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (2015), pp. 1-36.

<sup>355</sup> Vladimir Shubin, "ANC: A view from Moscow" (Second Revised Edition), (Jacan: Johannesburg, 2008)

<sup>356</sup> White, L. 'Telling More: Lies, Secrets, and History', *History and Theory*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (Dec, 2000), pp. 11-22.

lowest in the country. Agricultural labourers were not truly self-employed.<sup>357</sup> Because of the operation of the labour tenancy system, the pass laws, particularly the so-called "*trekpass*," the Native Service Contract, and the Masters and Servants Acts, they were typically linked to a specific farmer for the rest of their lives. Because of the farmers' strict control of farm labourers, organizing agricultural workers' unions and other bodies for farm workers was also extremely difficult.

The 400,000 African miners who worked in gold and coal mines endured the most arduous, dangerous, and unhealthy job for salaries that were a scandal and a disgrace in a business that pays out millions of rands to stockholders every year. They were away from their spouses and families for long periods of time. Although African state conferences had decided to work towards stopping this practice, a considerable proportion of them were "*imported*" from territories beyond the Republic, the Protectorates, S.W. Africa, the Portuguese Colonies, Nyasaland, Tanganyika, and elsewhere.<sup>358</sup> Because of the migratory labour system, there was a constant turnover of employees, making it difficult to organize mine workers, and mine owners go to considerable measures to prevent the formation of trade unionism among them. They had been under constant monitoring by police, spies, and informers since the massive strike organized by the African Mineworkers' Union in 1946.<sup>359</sup>

The unique character of colonialism in South Africa, with Whites grabbing all of the chances that had contributed to the establishment of a national capitalist class in other colonial countries, had stifled the emergence of an African capitalist class. All positions of economic power and influence were tightly guarded monopolies held solely by members of the White group. Only a small percentage of Africans profited from the exploitation of labour force. Some autonomous African farmers existed in some locations, producing for the market under "*capitalist*" lines.<sup>360</sup> However, in most cases, the holdings were so modest that the farmer and his family could and did cultivate them. African traders and shopkeepers made up a sizable portion of the population. Because they had to deal with a plethora of colour bars and particular regulations, as well as a lack of cash, their firms were rarely large or lucrative.

In many cases, the shop was controlled by non-African bondholders or wholesalers, with the shopkeeper serving as little more than an employee. African businessmen were prohibited from owning fixed assets. They were not permitted to trade in the city centers, which were the main sites of commercial activity, but were instead restricted to African townships and the periphery.

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<sup>357</sup> Thomas, D.P. The South African Communist Party (SACP) in the Post-apartheid Period. Review of African Political Economy. Volume 34, Issue 11. Debates on the Left in Southern Africa. Canada: University of Victoria, 2007. <sup>390</sup> Vladimir Shubin, "ANC: A view from Moscow" (Second Revised Edition), (Jacan: Johannesburg, 2008)

<sup>358</sup> Tagg, J. 'Evidence, truth and order: Photographic records and the growth of the state' in Wells, L. (ed), The Photography Reader (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 257-260.

<sup>359</sup> Tagg, J. The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories (Minnesota: Minnesota University Press, 1988).

<sup>360</sup> Priestland, D. 2009. The red flag: a history of communism. New York: Grove. Public Service Commission see South Africa. Public Service Commission.

<sup>361</sup> They were subjected to the pass laws, as well as all of the restrictions and insecurity that other Africans were subjected to. An African businessman was not permitted to open a branch or trade anywhere other than his home country.

The African business community had a vested interest in banding together with workers and farmers to combat White dominance. African intellectuals and professional groups shared all of colonialism's difficulties and indignities with their people. The largest category, teachers, earned significantly less than their white counterparts, and compared unfavourably to many African industrial employees.<sup>362</sup> They had to labour in deplorable conditions, in packed classrooms with outdated equipment, and teach youngsters who were half-starved. The "*Bantu Education*" strategy of the Nationalists imposed on them syllabuses that were designed to indoctrinate their students with servility and apartheid beliefs, with a minimal of true educational content. They were forced to teach in African languages despite the fact that there were no sufficient textbooks available in these languages. The calibre of African education had deteriorated dramatically during the Nationalist administration. The few areas in some White universities that were once open to African students for professional training had been closed.<sup>363</sup>

Instead, the Nationalist government established new "*tribal colleges*," which were a farce of higher education. In most professions, they lacked facilities to train architects, engineers, scientists, dentists, or technicians. Passports for students wishing to study abroad were frequently denied. Africans had few opportunities to further their cultural development. Almost all public libraries, theatres, symphony halls, and other cultural facilities were designated for white people, and the ones that were open to non-whites were substandard.<sup>364</sup> South Africa's egregious contradictions, as well as their own living conditions, which constituted a threat to their self-respect and human dignity, provided African intellectuals with a clear choice. Either they joined the battles of the masses, or they accepted the role as aids and agents in the perpetuation of White colonialism. Many African professional men, teachers, and even chiefs had, to their credit, given up all expectations of luxury and development in order to join their people completely.<sup>365</sup>

The urban workers, Africans employed in factories and transportation, steelworks and power stations, shops and offices, made up South Africa's most active and revolutionary force. The earnings of urban African employees were scandalously low in comparison to their high living costs. They were compelled to live a long distance from their places of employment, resulting in tedious and costly bus or rail rides. They were confined to the most hard and least satisfying

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<sup>361</sup> Stoler, A. L. 'Imperial Debris: Reflections on Ruins and Ruination', *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (2008), pp. 191-219.

<sup>362</sup> Stiegler, B. *Symbolic Misery - Volume One: The Hyperindustrial Epoch* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014).

<sup>363</sup> Stoler, A. L. 'Imperial Debris: Reflections on Ruins and Ruination', *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (2008), pp. 191-219.

<sup>364</sup> Stiegler, B. *Symbolic Misery - Volume One: The Hyperindustrial Epoch* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014).

<sup>365</sup> Rousseau, N. 'Popular History in the 1980s: The Politics of Production' (M.A. Thesis, University of the Western Cape, 1994).

jobs in shops and factories.<sup>366</sup> Pass restrictions and urban area rules made their jobs and homes vulnerable, and they were susceptible to police searches and surveillance on a continuous basis. Strikes were unlawful for African employees, and their trade unions were ignored and actively discouraged by the government. Even when companies were willing to engage in collective bargaining with African workers, the government stepped in to intervene.

Despite these and other handicaps, as well as the daily struggle for survival, this class, Africa's largest and most experienced working class, had repeatedly demonstrated that it was the African people's vanguard.<sup>367</sup> It had built up a number of stable and effective trade unions, devoted to the cause of African liberation and of workers' unity on African continent and throughout the world. African workers constituted the core of the African National Congress and the Communist Party. They had repeatedly come out on nationwide political general strikes and had been the leading force in every major struggle of the liberation movement.<sup>368</sup> This class alone, in alliance with the masses of rural people, was capable of leading a victorious struggle to end White domination and exploitation, having been disciplined and taught the lessons of organization and unity in the harsh school of capitalist production, and driven by their conditions of life into a united struggle for survival.

The Coloured and Malay people, who numbered 11/2 million and lived primarily in the Western Cape Province, were a national group that included workers, farm laborers, professionals, and small business owners.<sup>369</sup> Coloured people, like all non-whites, faced numerous forms of racial discrimination, which manifested itself in low standards of living, education, housing, nutrition, and health. Despite having the country's oldest artisan heritage, Coloured workers were denied access to senior positions, which were granted to Whites; Coloured farm labourers work and lived in deplorable conditions. Their wage was scandalously low, and on wine vineyards, it was subsidized by a liquor rationing system known as the "tot" system, which was harmful to their health.<sup>370</sup> For doing the same job, Coloured teachers and other state personnel were paid far less than white counterparts. Nonetheless, this group enjoyed a distinct advantage over Africans for many years.

To prevent the establishment of a Coloured national consciousness and the formation of a united front of oppressed non-white peoples for equality and the end of White colonialism, the White ruling group made several concessions, such as a qualified franchise, trade union privileges,

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<sup>366</sup> Stoler, A. L. 'Imperial Debris: Reflections on Ruins and Ruination', *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (2008), pp. 191-219.

<sup>367</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>368</sup> Soske, J. 'The Impossible Concept: Settler Liberalism, Pan-Africanism, and the language of non-racialism', *African Historical Review*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (2015), pp. 1-36.

<sup>369</sup> Robinson, C. J. *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (London: University of North Carolina Press, 1983).

<sup>370</sup> Legassick, M. 'The Past and Present Role of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC' in Liebenberg, I. et al (eds), *The Long March: The Story of the Struggle for Liberation in South Africa* (Pretoria: HAUM, 1994), pp. 173-186.

and property rights.<sup>371</sup> This policy did not go unnoticed. However, with the Nationalist government's deliberate removal of all privileges previously granted to Coloured people - the abolition of the common roll franchise, the introduction of apartheid and job reservation, White baasskap in trade unions, and separate university education - working-class and democratic leaders have risen to the fore. Coloured people are rejecting apartheid and joining forces with African and other freedom warriors to fight for their rights.<sup>372</sup>

The half-million-strong Indian community was mostly descended from indentured labourers who arrived in the Natal sugar fields a century ago. South African Indians had been subjected to a variety of demeaning and discriminatory limitations since the beginning of time, which they had fought against in a number of historic struggles.<sup>373</sup> There was a sizable class of Indian industrial and agricultural workers in South Africa, particularly in Natal, but also in the Transvaal. Indian businessmen, manufacturing proprietors, and small retailers made up a sizable sector. Unemployment and overpopulation in slum circumstances were terrible difficulties for Indian labourers.

Indians were denied the ability to vote and other democratic rights. Indian businessmen, like the rest of the community, faced a slew of challenges, particularly in terms of land and property ownership, as well as economic and educational prospects. They couldn't move from one province to another without special permission, and they were forbidden from the Orange Free State entirely.<sup>374</sup> The Nationalist administration had been particularly harsh in its application of the Group Locations Act to Indian communities in cities and small towns, removing them from their homes and livelihoods and threatening to "resettle" them in isolated areas where they suffered complete destruction. The Indian people had rejected the reformist bourgeois leadership's advice to compromise with oppression and seek sectional privileges at the expense of democratic principles and the fate of the masses.<sup>375</sup> Over the last three decades, they had wholeheartedly joined the various joint efforts of African and other oppressed peoples.

When the ANC, the SACP and the PAC were unbanned in 1990, many "strugglers" were surprised. The peaceful settlement process was further formalised in 1990 by the Groote Schuur Minute that heralded the start of formal meetings between the ANC and the government, the

Pretoria Minute in which the ANC suspended the armed struggle, and the National Peace Accord of 14 September 1991 that was signed by 27 political organisations and homeland

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<sup>371</sup> Ibid.

<sup>372</sup> Drew, A. (ed), *South Africa's Radical Tradition: A Documentary History, Volume two: 1943-1964* (Cape Town: Buchu Books, 1997).

<sup>373</sup> Robinson, C. J. *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (London: University of North Carolina Press, 1983).

<sup>374</sup> Drew, A. (ed), *South Africa's Radical Tradition: A Documentary History, Volume one: 1907-1950*

<sup>375</sup> Legassick, M. 'The Past and Present Role of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC' in Liebenberg, I. et al (eds), *The Long March: The Story of the Struggle for Liberation in South Africa* (Pretoria: HAUM, 1994), pp. 173-186.

governments to prepare the way for the CODESA (Convention for a Democratic South Africa) negotiations.<sup>376</sup> A further surprise (one that will remain a bone of contention) was that the negotiated settlement left a capitalist system in place. Joe Slovo wrote:

*“We are clearly not dealing with a defeated enemy and an early revolutionary seizure of power by the liberation movement could not be realistically posed. This conjuncture of the balance of forces (which continues to reflect current reality) provided a classical scenario which placed the possibility of negotiations on the agenda and we correctly initiated the whole process in which the ANC was accepted as the major negotiating adversary”*<sup>377</sup>

According to Legassick, this represented a series of compromises made by the ANC/SACP leadership based upon the fact that MK forces were too weak to secure an alternative. Another decisive factor at that time was the collapse of the Soviet Union and the radical mutation in what was then the Bipolar World Order.<sup>378</sup> Small confrontations between “communists” and “pro-western states” were rapidly going out of vogue and both sides were running out of (secret) money. Joe Slovo explained the situation at that time:

*“But what could we expect to achieve in the light of the balance of forces and the historical truism that no ruling class ever gives up all its power voluntarily? There was certainly never a prospect of forcing the regime's unconditional surrender across the table. It follows that the negotiating table is neither the sole terrain of the struggle for power nor the place where it will reach its culminating point. In other words, negotiations are only a part, and not the whole, of the struggle for real people's power”*<sup>379</sup>

This then was the strategy of the negotiations leading to the 1994 elections which the ANC won in alliance with the SACP and COSATU, which resulted in the 1996 constitution. Trevor Manuel in 1996 became custodian of the economy as Minister of Finance after Chris Liebenberg, and Nelson Mandela (Madiba) and Desmond Tutu spoke of the dream of the Rainbow Nation and nation building and reconciliation.<sup>380</sup> The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was to be the main implement of redress and the economy

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<sup>376</sup> Ibid.

<sup>377</sup> Slovo, J. 1992. Negotiations: what room for compromise?; SACP (South African Communist Party). 2002. The current phase of the National Democratic Revolution.

<sup>378</sup> Legassick, M. ‘The Past and Present Role of the Marxist Workers’ Tendency of the ANC’ in Liebenberg, I. et al (eds), *The Long March: The Story of the Struggle for Liberation in South Africa* (Pretoria: HAUM, 1994), pp. 173186.

<sup>379</sup> Slovo, J. 1988. *The South African working class and the National Democratic Revolution*.

<sup>380</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report: Volume One (South Africa, Truth and Reconciliation Committee, 1998).

was market related. The “1996 class project” derailed the NDR: The emergence of the 1996 class project has seen our historically shared perspective on the NDR, especially its broad socialist orientation being challenged in favour of a capitalist-oriented National Democratic State.<sup>381</sup>

The rise and domination of the 1996 class-project in the ANC and government has displaced the working class as a leading motive force of the NDR, in favour of other class forces, in particular the emerging black capitalist class. Policies such as GEAR, Black Economic Empowerment, etc. have ensured that the elite, including the black and white petty- bourgeoisie and capitalist class are the main beneficiaries since the 1994 democratic breakthrough”.<sup>382</sup> The economic policies of that time that were market orientated left, according to critics, the colonialist, imperialist economy unaffected by the political transition, with the result that the Blacks were still on the outside, in fact “un-liberated.” The SACP resolved to give concrete expression to the NDR “as a revolution towards socialism.”<sup>383</sup>

Thus the two, Colonialism of a Special Type and the Sunset Clause, professed that the colonized and exploited workers had to co-exist with the oppressors and exploiters. The theory of colonialism of special type has as its main function to explain the fact that SA colonizers are ‘live-in’ colonizers.<sup>384</sup> The logic of this analysis led to the conclusion that the ‘anti-colonial’ struggle should not be to drive the colonizers away but to reconcile with them, hence ‘power sharing mechanism’ which produced the 1994 government of national ‘unity’.

This colonialism of special type theory that promoted ‘power’ sharing and ‘reconciliation’ flowed from Moscow’s policy shift from supporting armed struggle to advocating negotiated settlement as the preferred solution. It is also premised on the Freedom Charter’s declaration that “South Africa belongs to all who live in it”.<sup>385</sup> The Sunset Clause, also written by Joe Slovo, was intended to focus the attention of the masses to the gradual removal of settler colonial racists from power positions not the overthrow of the entire state machinery.

#### **4.15 Nelson Mandela and South African Revolution**

Nelson Mandela joined the ANC in 1944 and became one of the top leaders in the ANC/South African Communist Party alliance over the next 18 years. He was jailed for terrorism in 1963. He and his fellow ANC/SACP saboteurs were caught red-handed with plans to import: 48, 000 Soviet made anti-personnel mines, 210, 000 hand grenades, and documents showing proof of

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<sup>381</sup> Thomas, D.P. The South African Communist Party (SACP) in the Post-apartheid Period. Review of African Political Economy. Volume 34, Issue 11. Debates on the Left in Southern Africa. Canada: University of Victoria, 2007.

<sup>382</sup> Ibid.

<sup>383</sup> SADTU (South African Democratic Teachers Union). 2009. National Democratic Revolution – introduction.

<sup>384</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2002. The current phase of the National Democratic Revolution.

<sup>385</sup> Thomas, D.P. The South African Communist Party (SACP) in the Post-apartheid Period. Review of African Political Economy. Volume 34, Issue 11. Debates on the Left in Southern Africa. Canada: University of Victoria, 2007.

the involvement of Moscow, Algeria, China, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany in financing and backing a communist revolution in South Africa.<sup>386</sup>

In the decade 1960 - 1970 Benemelis, Cuban defector and former high ranking official in the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Africa Section, held the position of Chief of the African Department, Chief of Africa for the Tricontinental, and Head of the Institute of African Studies in Havana. Cuba became involved in Africa and began developing ties and logistical support for the African revolutionary movements. Che Guevara was in charge of Castro’s African operations and worked with Benemelis in setting up training facilities, communication networks, and diplomatic offices for the fledgling African revolutionary movements of that time.<sup>387</sup> They met wit Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela at least three times in Sudan, Algeria, Ghana and Nigeria. In Ghana, Benemelis and members of the Cuban GDI (military Intelligence) provided Mandela with explosives, weapons, and other logistical support. Guevara trusted Mandela completely and believed him to be a dedicated Marxist/Leninist.<sup>388</sup>

During Mandela’s treason trial, a 62 page document in his own hand-writing entitled: “*How To be A Good Communist*” was offered as evidence. In the document Mandela said:

*“In our own country, the struggles of the oppressed people are guided by the South African Communist Party and inspired by its policies. The aim of the SACP is to defeat the Nationalist Government and to free the people of South Africa from the evils of racial discrimination and exploitation, and to build a classless and socialist society, in which the land, the mines, the mills, etc. will be nationalised. Under a Communist Party government, South Africa will become a land of milk and honey... There will be enough land and houses for all. There will be no unemployment, starvation, and disease... The victory of Socialism in the USSR, in the People’s Republic of China, in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Rumania, where the living conditions of the people were in many respects similar, and even worse than ours, proves that we too can achieve this important goal”*<sup>389</sup>

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<sup>386</sup> Stephen Ellis, “Nelson Mandela, the South African Communist Party and the origins of Umkhonto we Sizwe”, Cold War History Vol. 16, Iss. 1, 2016

<sup>387</sup> Bob Hepple, Young Man with a Red Tie: A Memoir of Mandela and the Failed Revolution, 1960–1963 (Johannesburg: Jacana, 2013)

<sup>388</sup> Stephen Ellis, “Nelson Mandela, the South African Communist Party and the origins of Umkhonto we Sizwe”, Cold War History Vol. 16, Iss. 1, 2016

<sup>389</sup> Stephen Ellis, “Nelson Mandela, the South African Communist Party and the origins of Umkhonto we Sizwe”, Cold War History Vol. 16, Iss. 1, 2016; Priestland, D. 2009. The red flag: a history of communism. New York: Grove. Public Service Commission see South Africa. Public Service Commission.

He argued that the Communist Party members in South Africa were the most advanced revolutionaries in modern history and were the contemporary fighting and driving force in changing society and the world. Explaining how to become a good communist, Mandela stated:

*"To become the most advanced communist revolutionary, it is not enough to understand and accept the theory of Marxism/Leninism. In addition, one must take part in the practical struggles of the people against oppression and exploitation. A Communist Party member must subordinate his personal interests to those of the Party. To sacrifice one's personal interests and even one's life without the slightest hesitation for the cause of the Party is the highest manifestation of communist ethics"*<sup>390</sup>

Mandela fervently believed that a Communist Party member in South Africa had to take part in the mass struggle initiated by the South African Communist Party, the Congress Movement (i.e. the African National Congress) or by other political bodies within the liberation movement. What prompted the apartheid regime to catch cold was Mandela's statement:

*"The people of South Africa, led by the South African Communist Party, will destroy capitalist society and build in its place socialism. The transition from capitalism to socialism and the liberation of the working class cannot be affected by slow changes or by reforms, as reactionaries and liberals often advise, but by revolution. One must, therefore, be a revolutionary and not a reformist"*<sup>391</sup>

In another article by Mandela entitled: "Operation Mayibuye", Mandela wrote:

*"As in Cuba, the general uprising must be sparked off by organised and well prepared guerrilla operations during the course of which the masses must be drawn in and armed."*<sup>392</sup>

After his release from incarceration on February 11, 1990 Mandela called for a continuation of the armed struggle by the ANC/SACP revolutionary forces, for a continuation of US – inspired sanctions, for a lifting of the State of Emergency and for the apartheid regime to yield power to

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<sup>390</sup> Priestland, D. 2009. The red flag: a history of communism. New York: Grove. Public Service Commission see South Africa. Public Service Commission; Stephen Ellis, "Nelson Mandela, the South African Communist Party and the origins of Umkhonto we Sizwe", Cold War History Vol. 16 , Iss. 1,2016

<sup>391</sup> Stephen Ellis, "Nelson Mandela, the South African Communist Party and the origins of Umkhonto we Sizwe", Cold War History Vol. 16 , Iss. 1, 2016; Priestland, D. 2009. The red flag: a history of communism. New York: Grove. Public Service Commission see South Africa. Public Service Commission.

<sup>392</sup> Priestland, D. 2009. The red flag: a history of communism. New York: Grove. Public Service Commission see South Africa. Public Service Commission; Stephen Ellis, "Nelson Mandela, the South African Communist Party and the origins of Umkhonto we Sizwe", Cold War History Vol. 16 , Iss. 1,2016

the ANC.<sup>393</sup> In his Cape Town Speech on February 11 (Standing behind a Soviet flag on the balcony of the City Hall from which he spoke) Mandela reaffirmed his support for and service to the South African Communist Party and the ANC and full agreement with their strategies and tactics. In addition to support for the armed struggle, Mandela said:

*“I salute General Secretary Joe Slovo (head of the South African Communist Party); one of our fine patriots. We are heartened by the fact that the alliance between ourselves and the Party (SACP) remains as strong as it always was...I salute the South African Communist Party for its steady contribution to the struggle for democracy.”*<sup>394</sup>

Towards the end of January 1990, shortly before his release from Victor Verster Prison, Mandela sent a handwritten letter to supporters (published in the South African press) calling for ANC/SACP nationalisation of mines, banks, and other major industries in South Africa after the ANC election victory. Asking that his statement on nationalisation receive the widest possible publicity, Mandela wrote:

*“The nationalisation of the mines, banks, and monopoly industries, is the policy of the ANC and a change or modification of our views in this regard is inconceivable...in our situation, state control of certain sectors of the economy is unavoidable.”*<sup>395</sup>

It could be argued that in revolutions, symbols are very important, as is the psychology of the revolutionaries and the targeted peoples. This is why the release of Mandela was considered so important by the ANC/SACP, the political left around the world, and the US State Department. The Mandela release was a psychological signal to the revolutionaries that they had won. It was a signal to South Africa’s black moderate masses that the ANC was staging a landslide victory, had the apartheid regime on the run and a confirmation to Whites that the victory of the revolutionaries was inevitable.<sup>396</sup> In short, Mandela’s release was a giant psychological victory for the ANC/SACP revolutionaries and a gargantuan psychological defeat for millions of South African Whites and moderate Blacks. The communists and the political left in South Africa and all over the world held their widest celebration in 30 years, and the momentum dramatically accelerated.

#### **4.16 The SACP, Soviet Union and the ANC**

After 1950 the SACP continued its policy and accelerated the process of infiltrating the ANC. It was during an era when the SACP was banned and large numbers of communists had to find

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<sup>393</sup> Ibid.

<sup>394</sup> Nelson Mandela, Cape Town Speech on February 11, 1990.

<sup>395</sup> Mandela Letter from Victor Verster Prison, January 1990.

<sup>396</sup> Stephen Ellis, “Nelson Mandela, the South African Communist Party and the origins of Umkhonto we Sizwe”, Cold War History Vol. 16, Iss. 1, 2016; Priestland, D. 2009. The red flag: a history of communism. New York: Grove. Public Service Commission see South Africa. Public Service Commission.

an alternative organisation through which to pursue their objectives. In his 1982 testimony before the Denton Senate Commission, Bartholomew Hlapane said:

*“It is a standing rule that members of the South African Communist Party must belong to a mass organisation such as the African National Congress or the South African Congress of Trade Unions. The idea was to get members to infiltrate such organisations, to undermine the leadership, and ultimately gain control of these organisations”*<sup>397</sup>

Over the years the relationship between the ANC and the SACP grew into a firm alliance to the point where Oliver Tambo was able to tell the SACP on July 30, 1981, during its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, that when the ANC spoke, “It was not so much as a guest invited to address a foreign organisation. Rather, we speak of and to our own.”<sup>398</sup> In September 1985, the monthly ANC publication, *Sechaba*, stated that:

*“The members of the ANC fully understand why both the ANC and the SACP are two hands in the same body, why they are two pillars of our revolution.”*<sup>399</sup>

At the turn of the 1990s, 23 out of 30 of the members of the National Executive Committee of the ANC were either members and /or active supporters of the SACP. The ANC was highly influenced by the SACP and the SACP was, in turn controlled by the Soviet Union. Joe Slovo, reportedly a colonel in the KGB, was considered to be the real leader of the ANC, taking orders directly from Moscow and the KGB. The ANC clearly aligned itself with the Soviet Union in global politics.<sup>400</sup>

In the January 1984 edition of *Sechaba*, Alfred Nzo, Secretary General of the ANC and a Vice President of the Soviet Front, the World Peace Council, said that the ANC had been a consistent champion of the cause of world peace, and voiced its full support for the then Soviet peace initiatives. In June 1989 the SACP, at its 7<sup>th</sup> Congress, issued a blueprint for the final conquest of South Africa, entitled “The Path to Power.”<sup>401</sup> This document stated that:

*“In the period after the seizure of power by the democratic forces, the working class will need to continue the struggle against capitalism... Victory in the national democratic revolution is, for our working class, the most direct route to socialism and, ultimately, to*

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<sup>397</sup> Bartholomew Hlapane, Testimony at Denton Senate Commission, 1982.

<sup>398</sup> Oliver Tambo, SACP 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations, July 30, 1981.

<sup>399</sup> *Sechaba*, September 1985.

<sup>400</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2002. The current phase of the National Democratic Revolution.

<sup>401</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 1989. The path to power: programme of the South African Communist Party as adopted at the Seventh Congress, 1989.

*communism... seizure of power by the revolutionary masses is the fundamental task of the national democratic revolution. This will entail the destruction of existing state institutions...seizure of power will be the product of an escalating and progressively merging mass political and military struggle with the likelihood of culminating in an insurrection...In the first stage of the two-stage revolution the ANC and the SACP will act as one – agreeing on all key strategy and tactics’’<sup>402</sup>*

The theory and perspective logically led to the formation of the ‘Mass Democratic Movement’ strategy which accommodated everybody from committed revolutionaries, moderates, reformists, opportunists, reactionaries, puppets and dissenters. Slovo argued that it is the inclusiveness of everybody and everything that makes the NDR democratic and national and therefore justifiable.<sup>403</sup>

It is highly significant that at funerals of members of the UDF (United Democratic Front), the internal wing of the ANC, the Soviet flag was always given pride of place at the head of the procession. Behind it was the ANC flag, UDF banners then followed in subordinate positions. This created an impression that an ANC-dominated government would be based on Marxist/Leninist principles and subservient to the Soviet Union.<sup>404</sup> It is also significant that at the first official rally of the ANC in 30 years, held near Soweto on October 29, 1989, a huge red flag of the SACP was given a prominent position on the platform. In this regard, the liberal Business Day posited:

*“Apologists for the ANC who have disputed own the years the dominance of the Communist Party within the organisation’s national executive have been convincingly answered: to march with the ANC is to march under the Red flag. Rather, it is to march behind the Red flag’’<sup>405</sup>*

Throughout the stands, the red flags of international communism outnumbered the ANC flags. Thus, by implication, communists intentionally took the ANC and its allies through a reformist path.

#### **4.17 The ‘Two Phase Theory’ Revolution**

Soviet revolutionary theory accords a central role to ‘national liberation movements’ in Third World countries. In terms of Soviet theory, Third World countries cannot move directly to

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<sup>402</sup> Ibid.

<sup>403</sup> Slovo, J. 1988. The South African working class and the National Democratic Revolution.

<sup>404</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2002. The current phase of the National Democratic Revolution.

<sup>405</sup> Business Day, 31 October 1989; Thomas G. Karis, “South African Liberation: The Communist Factor”, Foreign Policy magazine Volume 65, Number 2 1986.

the stage of ‘national liberation.’<sup>406</sup> During this stage a broad national front should be created comprising a coalition of all ‘progressive elements’ (e.g. liberals, churchmen, students) and workers under the leadership of the ‘vanguard party.’ In the case of South Africa, ‘vanguard party’ during the national liberation stage is the ANC.

Once the ‘national liberation’ has been achieved and the ‘national democracy’ has been established, the second stage of the revolution takes place under the leadership of the ‘vanguard party’ of the workers, i.e. the SACP.<sup>407</sup> During this stage, liberal democratic elements in the former national front are dispensed with prior to the establishment of the ‘peoples’ democracy’ or communist state. The SACP clearly subscribes to the two-phase theory of revolution. In 1981 the SACP stated that its immediate aim was to:

*“Win the objectives of the national democratic revolution, more particularly to win national liberation for all the Black oppressed and to destroy the economic and political power of the ruling class.”<sup>408</sup>*

The SACP further argued that its strategic (long term) aim was to:

*“Destroy the system of capitalist exploitation in South Africa and to replace it with a socialist system in which the ownership of the means of production will be socialised and the whole economy organised to serve the interest of the people”<sup>409</sup>*

The ANC also subscribes to the doctrine of the two-phase revolution. The first phase is the ‘liberation under the banner of ‘The Freedom Charter.’ The second phase is the establishment of the ‘peoples’ democracy.’ The ANC publication *Sechaba*, published in East Germany, mentioned in its September ’85 edition, that:

*“We in the ANC know that a nationalist struggle and the socialist struggle are not one and the same thing, and they do not belong to the same historical period. The two represent two distinct categories of the revolution.”<sup>410</sup>*

The same publication went on to say:

*“The chief content of the present phase of our revolution is the national liberation of the Black people. It is impossible for South*

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<sup>406</sup> Anthony Sampson, *Mandela: The Authorised Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999)

<sup>407</sup> Irina Filatova and Apollon Davidson, *The Hidden Thread: Russia and South Africa in the Soviet Era* (Johannesburg & Cape Town: Jonathan Ball, 2013)

<sup>408</sup> SACP, *The African Communist*, No. 87, Fourth Quarter 1981.

<sup>409</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>410</sup> *Sechaba*, East Germany, 85<sup>th</sup> Edition, September 1981.

*Africa to make the advance to socialism before the national liberation of the Black oppressed nation”<sup>411</sup>*

The ANC/SACP Alliance argued that Vietnam, Cuba and Nicaragua are classic examples of the resounding success of the two-phase theory revolution. In Vietnam there was a national front, the FLN, which included non-communists such as academics, Buddhists, Catholics, and students.<sup>412</sup> However, as soon as the ‘national liberation’ had been achieved, the vanguard element of the front came to the fore and quickly eliminated its former democratic and liberal allies in the front. Many went to re-education camps, many fled, and many were killed.

In Cuba, there was also abroad front known as the July 26 Movement, including many democrats opposed to the Batista regime. At this stage of the revolution Fidel Castro promised his liberal allies that he would lead the country to genuine democracy with free elections.<sup>413</sup> However, once he had seized power, many of his former non-communist allies were imprisoned, exiled, or executed.

The same scenario was played out in Nicaragua after the success of the National Liberation Front in overthrowing the Somoza regime. Once again, the vanguard party, in this case the Sandinistas, seized power and began to eliminate the influence of its erstwhile democratic and liberal allies. In the Fourth Quarter 1981 issue of ‘The African Communist’, Sol Dubula explained why it was correct that the ANC and not the SACP should lead the liberation alliance during the first phase of the revolution.

*“This is exactly the way the Party (SACP) exercises its leading and vanguard role...This is the way the Vietnamese Communists exercised their vanguard role in relation to the FLN during the liberation struggle, and it is also the way in which the early Cuban Communists related to Fidel Castro’s July 26 Movement.”<sup>414</sup>*

In South Africa the consequences of a seizure of power experienced in Vietnam, Cuba and Nicaragua could arguably be attributed to smoke, mirrors and rhetoric about power sharing, Black majority rule, national reconciliation, and a government of national unity. The De Klerk’s ‘political left’ regime led by its appeasement-oriented Foreign Affairs Department, in connivance with the US State Department and the Soviet bloc, unseated the conservative, anti-communist wing of the National Party.<sup>415</sup> White opposition to De Klerk’s capitulation was

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<sup>411</sup> Ibid.

<sup>412</sup> Stephen Ellis, ‘Nelson Mandela, the South African Communist Party and the origins of Umkhonto we Sizwe’, *Cold War History* Vol. 16, Iss. 1, 2016

<sup>413</sup> Bob Hepple, *Young Man with a Red Tie: A Memoir of Mandela and the Failed Revolution, 1960–1963* (Johannesburg: Jacana, 2013)

<sup>414</sup> Sol Dubula, ‘The African Communist’. Fourth Quarter 1981 issue.

<sup>415</sup> Irina Filatova and Apollon Davidson, *The Hidden Thread: Russia and South Africa in the Soviet Era* (Johannesburg & Cape Town: Jonathan Ball, 2013)

labelled as knee jerk anti-communist, right-wing fanatics, racial bigots, and neo-Nazis. The heavily politicised South African Defence Force (SADF) at the top with National Party appointees rendered the possibility of a military coup inconceivable.

Outside pressure from the political left in America, Europe, and the East bloc, from internationalist groups such as the Council of Foreign Relations, the Bilderbergers, along with infiltration by the ANC and the SACP, accelerated the revolutionary process in South Africa. Communist infiltration of universities, the media and churches also helped push South Africa towards a revolutionary path.<sup>416</sup>

The South African churches were heavily influenced by the pro-Soviet, pro-ANC, pro-SACP South African Council of Churches, and by pro-ANC, pro-Marxist liberation theologians such as Bishop Desmond Tutu, Allan Boesak, Beyers Naude, Bishop Hurly, and hundreds more. Furthermore, to guarantee the best possible peace and profits for themselves in the ANC dispensation, many liberal South African businessmen and bankers, arguably naïve about communist revolutionary tactics became unwitting agents of the ANC/SACP alliance in furthering the revolution.<sup>417</sup>

#### 4.18 Counter-revolutionary threats

Nevertheless, disgruntled former collaborators with the apartheid regime in the former Bantustan regions of South Africa and grass roots Afrikanerdom, coupled with 20% - 25% of the English proved to be a counter-revolutionary. The Afrikaner 'nation' were strict Calvinist Christians and buried deep within their Dutch Reformed Church teachings was the 'Doctrine of the Resistance of the Lesser Magistrate.'<sup>418</sup>

This doctrine says, essentially, that all authority comes from God, that all levels of authority are responsible first to obey God. When the central government rebels against God and His law, the lesser magistrate (e.g. duly elected town councillors, homeland leaders, parliamentarians, etc.) have a responsibility to call their constituents together to defend themselves against the central government (the greater magistrate) tyranny. The American colonists used this doctrine to revolt against the French Catholic kings, and Cromwell used it against Charles I.<sup>419</sup>

The doctrinal concept of 'Resistance of the Lesser Magistrate', while rejected by the liberal leadership of the Dutch Reformed Church, was understood by many at the grass roots level.

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<sup>416</sup> Ibid.

<sup>417</sup> Bob Hepple, *Young Man with a Red Tie: A Memoir of Mandela and the Failed Revolution, 1960–1963* (Johannesburg: Jacana, 2013)

<sup>418</sup> Irina Filatova and Apollon Davidson, *The Hidden Thread: Russia and South Africa in the Soviet Era* (Johannesburg & Cape Town: Jonathan Ball, 2013)

<sup>419</sup> Alexander, P. 2012. A massive rebellion of the poor. *Mail and Guardian*, 13 April; Baradat, L.P. 2009. *Political ideologies: their origins and impact*. 10th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Dr Andries Treurnicht, the Conservative Party leader, invoked the Doctrine of the Resistance of the Lesser Magistrate in parliament between 1989 and 1990.<sup>420</sup> He argued that if and when De Klerk's government capitulated to the communist revolution they would resist – invoking this doctrine. Treurnicht's death from a heart attack in 1991 dealt a blow to possible Afrikaner resistance to the ANC/SACP revolution.

Another counter-revolutionary threat came from a Zulu ethnic-based Inkatha Freedom Party and its leader, inkosi Mangosuthu Buthelezi. Though he was for negotiations, if the ANC or De Klerk's regime tried to cut him out, or designate the ANC as having the sole or primary negotiating role for South African Blacks, it could ignite a civil war. There was also talk of a possible alliance between conservative (non-racist) Afrikaners and Inkatha-aligned Zulu people viewed as powerful enough to stand against what was perceived as Xhosa-dominated ANC/SACP alliance.<sup>421</sup> Both groups were largely Christian, fundamentally anti-communist and fanatically pro-South Africa. The report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on the nature and extent of KwaZulu government and Inkatha's violation of civil liberties spoke volumes. However, the inclusion of Buthelezi in Mandela's cabinet, control of KwaZulu Natal by Inkatha from 1994 to 2004 thawed its relations with the ANC/SACP/COSATU alliance.<sup>422</sup>

The South African liberals, moderates, and even some conservatives believed that the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 heralded an end to the Cold War and death to communism. Fervently believing that the world was drifting towards lasting peace, De Klerk said:

*“We have nothing to fear from communism, the ANC, from the South African Communist Party or from the revolution. We shouldn't be concerned about the Soviet or SACP flags at the rallies, or the communist clenched fist salutes or the ANC/SACP Marxist/Leninist rhetoric. None of it matters, communism is dead!”*<sup>423</sup>

What if communism is not dead? What if we are witnessing the greatest strategic deception since Hitler feigned peace at Munich in 1938 as he was preparing for war? What if the communist parties and secret police in Eastern Europe were not really dissolving, but rather merely changing their names and outward appearances and structures?<sup>424</sup> What if the Soviet

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<sup>420</sup> Bratton, M. & Van De Walle, N. 1998. Democratic experiments in Africa: regime transitions in comparative perspective. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>421</sup> Thomas G. Karis, “South African Liberation: The Communist Factor”, Foreign Policy magazine Volume 65, Number 2 1986

<sup>422</sup> Bratton, M. & Van De Walle, N. 1998. Democratic experiments in Africa: regime transitions in comparative perspective. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>423</sup> Irina Filatova and Apollon Davidson, The Hidden Thread: Russia and South Africa in the Soviet Era (Johannesburg & Cape Town: Jonathan Ball, 2013)

<sup>424</sup> Duvenhage, A. 2005. Political transformation – a conceptual orientation and South African application. Journal for contemporary history, 29(3):19-41.

and communist armies of Eastern Europe were not really disbanding, but merely changed their names, faces and modus operandi?

What if the Soviet Union was not really planning to disarm, but was instead streamlining and modernizing its formidable military machine? What if the moves towards democracy and a multiple party system in the Soviet Union were an act, a façade, a ploy to get the West to relax its defenses, lower its guard and pour in billions in Western economic aid?<sup>425</sup> What if this was not the first era of glasnost/perestroika, but the sixth since 1921? These are academic *cum* political questions to be answered and further unpacked.

#### 4.19 Conclusion

The Communist Party brought about profound changes in the thinking, political outlook, demands, forms of organisation and methods of struggle of the oppressed and exploited people of this country. The deep-rooted crisis in South Africa could not be resolved by the Nationalist government, using methods of force and violence or attempting to deceive home and world opinion with fraudulent schemes of "*Bantu self-government*". Nor could it be resolved by mere change of government to another section of the White ruling class which would make superficial concessions while leaving the essence of the colonial system and monopoly control intact.<sup>426</sup> The crisis sprang from the fundamental contradictions of South African society: between the oppressed people and their rulers; between South African colonialism and the world-wide movement against colonialism and imperialism; between the working class and the rural masses, together with the middle classes, on the one side, and the handful of monopoly capitalists on the other.

This crisis could only be resolved by a revolutionary change in the social system which would overcome these conflicts by putting an end to the colonial oppression of the African and other non-White people. The immediate and imperative interests of all sections of the South African people demanded the carrying out of such a change, a national democratic revolution which would overthrow the colonialist state of White supremacy and establish an independent state of National Democracy in South Africa.

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<sup>425</sup> Legassick, M. 'The Past and Present Role of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC' in Liebenberg, I. et al (eds), *The Long March: The Story of the Struggle for Liberation in South Africa* (Pretoria: HAUM, 1994), pp. 173-186.

<sup>426</sup> Duvenhage, A. 2005. Political transformation – a conceptual orientation and South African application. *Journal for contemporary history*, 29(3):19-41.

## CHAPTER FIVE:

### RELATIONS WITH THE TRIPARTITE ALLIANCE

#### 5.1 Introduction

The last chapter analyzed the vanguard role of the SACP in the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) and paid particular attention to colonialism of a special type and the two-phase revolutionary strategy as ideological blueprints upon which the liberation of the oppressed people in South Africa would be attained. In this chapter more light is shed on different ideological viewpoints of the SACP, ANC, and COSATU. What is also examined is how the shift to the left in the country's political arena could possibly affect cohesion of the Tripartite Alliance. From 16–20 December 2007, the ANC held its 52nd National Elective Conference at the University of Limpopo in Polokwane.<sup>427</sup> Known as the highest decisionmaking body of the ANC, the National Elective Conference is held every five years. The president of the party gets elected at this event. Electing a president is not only important at structural level for the ANC, but also has nation-wide implications as the leader of the ANC is highly likely to become the president of South Africa.<sup>428</sup> The National Elective Conference is also the event at which the policies and programmes of the ANC are articulated and decided, where constitutional amendments are adopted. It is also here where the National Executive Committee (NEC) and the top six of the party are elected.<sup>429</sup> The National Executive Committee (NEC), which is subject to the South African Constitution, is the highest organ of the ANC operating between National Elective Conferences and is given a mandate to lead the organisation.

At the National Elective Conference in 2007, Jacob Zuma was elected president of the ANC. Zuma's allies included the then ANCYL president, Julius Malema, general-secretary of the SACP, Blade Nzimande, and general-secretary of COSATU, Zwelinzima Vavi. The province of KwaZulu-Natal played a particularly important role in Zuma's rise to power.<sup>463</sup> However, in 2017, the picture has changed completely. Malema is now the leader of the EFF, a radical leftist party that has adopted a heavy anti-Zuma stance. COSATU and the SACP, once staunch Zuma allies, are demanding that the president steps down. The deputy president of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, who is seen as a front runner in the ANC's presidential race, has been officially endorsed by COSATU. The SACP, too, has withdrawn support for Zuma and

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<sup>427</sup> Pillay, D. 2006. *Cosatu, Alliances and Working Class Politics in Trade Unions and Democracy: Cosatu Workers' Political Attitudes in South Africa*, Buhlungu S. (ed), Human Sciences Research Council. Cape Town.

<sup>428</sup> Rodan, G. 2006. *Neoliberalism and Transparency: Political versus Economic Liberalism*. In: Robison, R. (ed.). *The Neoliberal Revolution: Forging the Market State*. Palgrave Macmillan. pp. 197-215. London.

<sup>429</sup> Pillay, D. 2006. *Cosatu, Alliances and Working Class Politics in Trade Unions and Democracy: Cosatu Workers' Political Attitudes in South Africa*, Buhlungu S. (ed), Human Sciences Research Council. Cape Town. <sup>463</sup> Cohan, A.S. 2017. *Theories of revolution: an introduction*. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons.

has thrown its weight behind Ramaphosa, with the SACP second deputy-general secretary, Solly Mapaila, stating:

*“To expect that we can turn the tide and convince people that we will stop corruption and corporate capture under the president’s leadership is unreasonable”.*<sup>430</sup>

SACP North West provincial secretary, Madoda Sambatha, also criticised Zuma by commenting: *“...if the president’s choice is Nkosazana, our choice is Ramaphosa”.*<sup>431</sup> Zuma’s unceremonious axing of Blade Nzimande, SACP director-general, from the Cabinet in October 2017 could be the last straw that broke the camel’s back in the rapidly deteriorating relationship between Zuma and the SACP.

Zuma has tactically and publicly endorsed his ex-wife, Dlamini-Zuma, to replace him as ANC president, which would place her in pole position to become president of South Africa.<sup>432</sup> Regarding her previous position as chairperson of the African Union (AU), Zuma said: *“She turned the AU into what we wanted it to be. She is very respected in Africa and it would be surprising why she would not be respected in South Africa”.*<sup>467</sup>

Dlamini-Zuma has also been endorsed by the ANCYL, the ANC Women’s League (ANCWL) as well as the Premier League (a lobby group led by the premiers of North West, Free State and Mpumalanga).

However, fighting between ANC factions in KwaZulu-Natal threatens to derail Zuma’s plan to have Dlamini-Zuma succeed him.<sup>433</sup> The eastern KwaZulu-Natal region accounts for more than a fifth of ANC members (the most out of the nine provinces), which makes the province a key player in the presidential race.<sup>434</sup> Even though Dlamini-Zuma has a Zulu background and originally comes from KwaZulu-Natal, the feud in the province has weakened Zuma’s grip on power, with former speaker of the Pietermaritzburg municipality, Babu Baijoo, stating:

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<sup>430</sup> Woddis, J. 2017. *New theories of revolution: a commentary on the views of Frantz Fanon, Regis Debray and Herbert Marcuse*. New York: International Publishers.

<sup>431</sup> Vavi, Z. 2011. *Zwelinzima Vavi’s address to the commemoration of the Cradock four*.

<sup>432</sup> SAPA (South Africa Press Association). 2012. *Zuma says pay gap talk is a farce*.<sup>467</sup>

SAPA (South Africa Press Association). 2012. *Zuma says pay gap talk is a farce*.

<sup>433</sup> D. & Zivkovic, A., eds. *Revolution in the making of the modern world*. London: Routledge. p. 151-164).

<sup>434</sup> *Ibid*.

*“In all my years in the ANC, I’ve never seen things as bad as this when it comes to unity. The branches have been captured by individuals. It’s a fight for resources and positions”.*<sup>435</sup>

While the much-anticipated National Elective Conference will take place in December 2017, another important event occurred earlier in the year, known as the National Policy Conference. The ANC’s 5th National Policy Conference, staged from 30 June to 5 July 2017, attracted 3 500 delegates from party branches across the country to discuss and debate the party’s policies.<sup>436</sup> During the Conference, it became clear that there was little consensus on how to deal with challenges such as land redistribution and free higher education, and what exactly is meant by ‘white monopoly capital’.<sup>437</sup>

Zuma was elected as party president at the National Elective Conference in 2007 with the help of Julius Malema and the ANCYL, COSATU, the SACP and the ANC KwaZulu-Natal branch. However, today Zuma finds himself in a much more vulnerable position. Not only has he been abandoned by COSATU and SACP, which have thrown their weight behind Ramaphosa, but the new leftist parties such as the EFF, headed by former Zuma ally, Julius Malema, are chipping away at the ANC’s support base. There are clear signs of disunity, not just between the ANC and its Alliance partners but also within the ruling party itself, if the disagreements on a variety of issues at the National Policy Conference are anything to go by.

This chapter looks at the Mandela, Mbeki and Zuma administrations, the state of the economy during their tenure, and their relationship with COSATU and the SACP. This will indicate not only the level of cohesion within the Alliance but also how much influence the Alliance partners have had on the ANC. This, in turn, should reveal the ideological direction in which the Tripartite Alliance is moving in practical terms.

The state of the economy is described according to the following indicators:

- 1) GDP growth rate;
- 2) Number of houses constructed by the government;
- 3) Unemployment rate;
- 4) Investment into South Africa;

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<sup>435</sup> Majavu, A. 2011. SA to be ungovernable. Times live, 22 Aug. Makgetlaneng, S. 2011. South Africa: ANC Youth League and economic transformation.

<sup>436</sup> The ANC’s 5th National Policy Conference, 30 June to 5 July 2017.

<sup>437</sup> Filatova, I. 2012. The lasting legacy: the Soviet theory of the National-Democratic Revolution and South Africa. South African historical journal, 64(3):507-537.

5) Matric pass rate. The GDP growth rate was chosen as it measures the output of a nation and is therefore a good indicator of a country's economic health.<sup>438</sup>

Subsidised housing formed an important part of the RDP, which was vigorously promoted by COSATU. Therefore, the building of houses by government is a good indicator of the ANC's commitment to its Alliance partners. Employment, or the lack thereof, is strongly linked to people's level of education. According to Statistics South Africa's Quarterly Labour Force Survey, people with a tertiary qualification to their credit have an absorption rate into the labour force of 75.6% compared to 33.0% among people who have only completed high school.<sup>439</sup>

Thus, employment and education levels are useful in judging how skilled a country's population is and how the state has fared in providing opportunities to its citizens. Lastly, investment was also included as an indicator since global and domestic investors have been biased in favour of a market economy.

## 5.2 The Conciliation Era: The SACP and COSATU

Nelson Mandela was South Africa's first post-apartheid president, with his term lasting from 1994 to 1998.<sup>440</sup> Although Mandela was considered an anti-communist during his youth, he later became more sympathetic to the SACP's cause and worked closely with the Alliance partners and uMkhonto we Sizwe.<sup>441</sup> His working closely with both the SACP and COSATU post 1994 ensured that the ANC followed a mild leftist-to-centrist public policy approach at the time. However, Mandela entrusted the housing ministry to Joe Slovo, a famous communist, while other SACP members were also given posts in his government.<sup>442</sup>

In his first couple of years as president, Mandela pushed through social reforms such as the implementation of the Reconstruction and Development Plan (RDP) With the ANC constituting a multi-class constituency, the final version of the RDP was seen as a 'class compromise'.<sup>478</sup> To some extent, the RDP represented a general consensus of the liberation movement as it proposed a state-led, market-assisted transformation process and promised to accommodate capital but not to be subordinate to it. The ANC adopted the RDP as its manifesto for the 1994 elections and COSATU, in turn, backed the ANC during the elections

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<sup>438</sup> Sangman, S. N. 2017. "Politics Rules: The False Primacy of Institutions in Developing Countries." *Political Studies*. 55 (1). pp. 201-224

<sup>439</sup> South African Institute of Race Relations, 2017:282.

<sup>440</sup> Gumede, W.M (2007) *Thabo Mbeki and the battle for the soul of the ANC*. Cape Town: Zebra Press.

<sup>441</sup> Ibid.

<sup>442</sup> Stephen Ellis, "Nelson Mandela, the South African Communist Party and the origins of Umkhonto we Sizwe", *Cold War History* Vol. 16 , Iss. 1,2016 <sup>478</sup> Ibid.

and deployed key leaders into the ANC government to oversee the implementation of the RDP.<sup>443</sup>

With the adoption of GEAR in 1996, general economic liberation under Mandela became a contentious issue for the SACP. The decision to adopt GEAR was made with little input from COSATU, and both COSATU and the SACP vigorously attacked GEAR as its measures would move South Africa closer to a neoliberal orthodoxy.<sup>444</sup> The ANC, led by Mandela himself, reacted harshly to COSATU's and the SACP's complaints about GEAR.

However, serious tensions between the SACP and the ANC did not develop until Thabo Mbeki's time in office as Mandela was seen as a highly stabilising force around whom many (on all sides) could at least rally to some extent.<sup>445</sup> According to Gumede, the SACP conceded that Mandela used his iconic authority to push through GEAR, but he later redeemed himself in the eyes of the communists when he expressed regret at the way it had been done.<sup>446</sup>

### 5.3 Conciliation Era and Economic Policy

The South Africa that the ANC inherited from the National Party (NP) in 1994 was a country crippled economically and consumed by a plethora of social problems. Unemployment, poverty, crime, corruption and intercommunal violence threatened to plunge the country into civil war.<sup>447</sup> International sanctions and boycotts against the apartheid regime had brought economic growth from the 1970s and onwards to a near standstill. The state had amassed huge debts thanks to the apartheid regime's military endeavours across the Southern African region.<sup>448</sup> The new ANC government was also faced with a 'junk bond' credit rating which complicated and limited the state's capacity to deal with South Africa's debt problems at the time. It was therefore essential for the ANC to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) which would be used to boost the country's economic growth rate and, in turn, generate higher employment and increase state revenues.<sup>449</sup>

The 1980s were turbulent years for South Africa, particularly in terms of GDP growth, with the economy shrinking in 1982, 1983 and 1985 and then experiencing 0% growth in 1986.

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<sup>443</sup> Tagg, J. 'Evidence, truth and order: Photographic records and the growth of the state' in Wells, L. (ed), *The Photography Reader* (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 257-260.

<sup>444</sup> Stephen Ellis, "Nelson Mandela, the South African Communist Party and the origins of Umkhonto we Sizwe", *Cold War History* Vol. 16, Iss. 1, 2016

<sup>445</sup> Magstadt, .M. 2006. *Understanding politics: ideas, institutions & issues*. 7th ed. Belmont CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

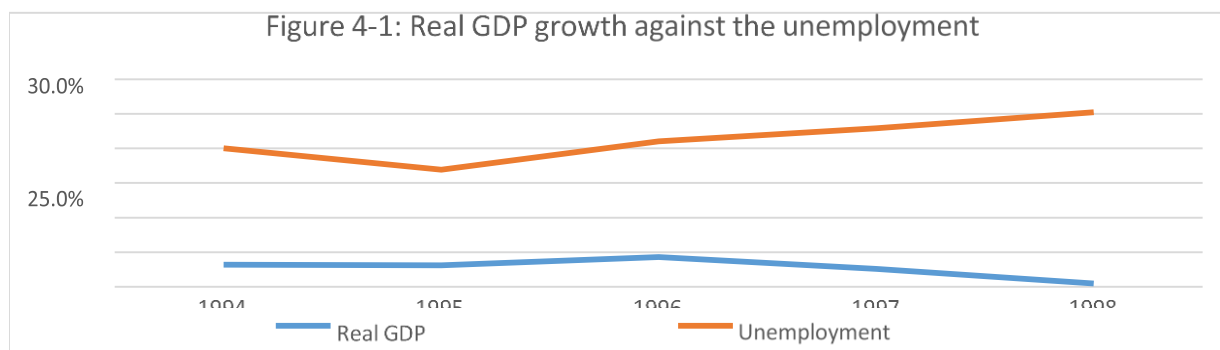
<sup>446</sup> Gumede, W.M. 2005. *Thabo Mbeki and the battle for the soul of the ANC*. Cape Town: Zebra Press.

<sup>447</sup> Hood, C. 2004. *Controlling Modern Government*. Edward Elgar. London.

<sup>448</sup> Bratton, M. & Van De Walle, N. 1998. *Democratic experiments in Africa: regime transitions in comparative perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

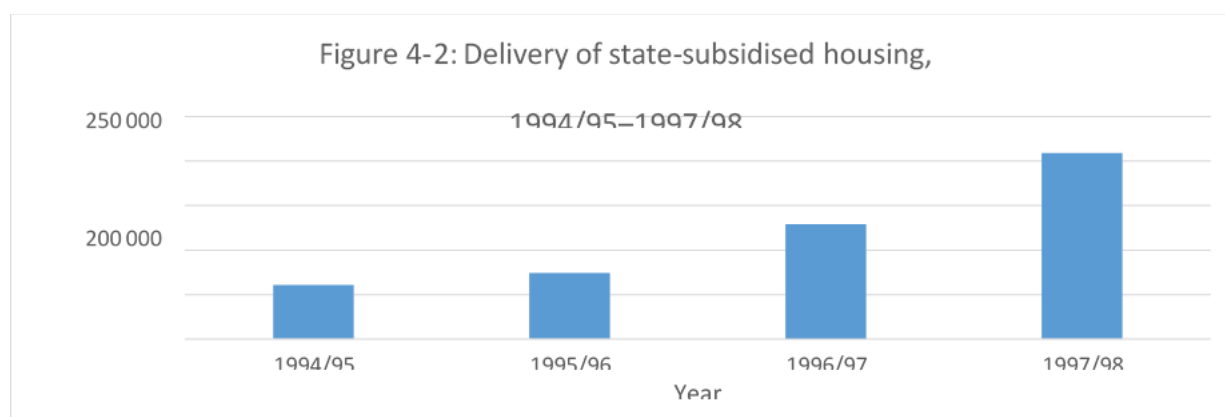
<sup>449</sup> Ginsburg, D. and Webster, E.C. 1995. *Taking Democracy Seriously: Worker Expectations and Parliamentary Democracy*. Indicator Press. Durban

During Mandela's term, the economy grew by an average annual rate of 2.7%.<sup>450</sup> The proportion of pupils in public schools who passed the National Senior Certificate examinations in 1998 was 49%, down from 58% in 1994. Unemployment increased from 20% in 1994 to 25.2% in 1998. However, on the positive side, the proportion of households with no access to electricity declined from 49.1% in 1994/95 to 38.8% in 1998/99. In addition, investment increased from R217.5 billion in 1994 to R290.8 billion in 1998<sup>451</sup> Below are a number of charts illustrating the state of the South African economy under Mandela.



**Figure 4-1: Real GDP growth against the unemployment rate, 1994–98;** Source: SAIRR (2017: 82–286)

Figure 4-1 indicates that there is a close relationship between the GDP growth rate and the general unemployment rate. That relationship is especially evident when one looks at the period 1996–1998. GDP growth declined every year and slowed to a trickle in 1998. During the period, unemployment gradually increased, reaching more than 25% for the first time since South Africa's democratic transition to democracy in 1994.

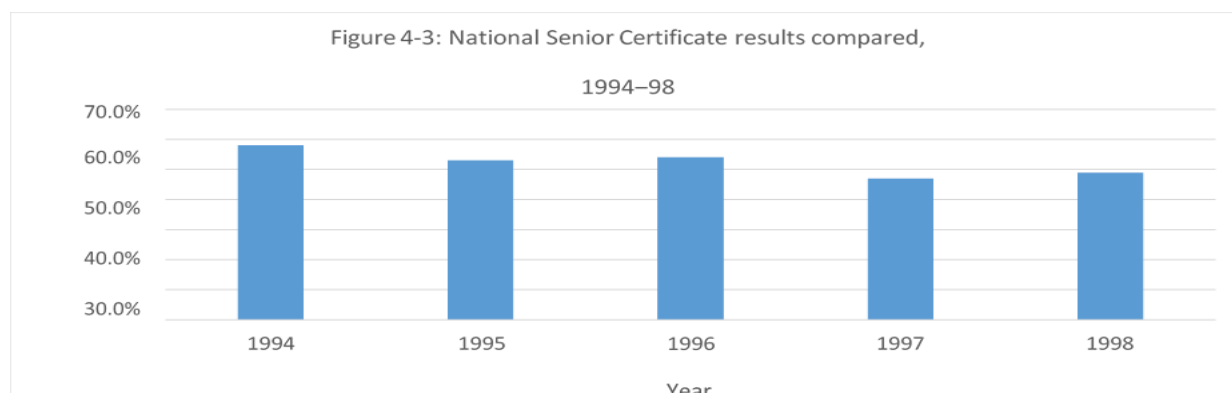


**Figure 4-2: Delivery of state-subsidised housing, 1994/95–1997/98;** Source: SAIRR (2017: 713)

<sup>450</sup> SAIRR, 2017:82.

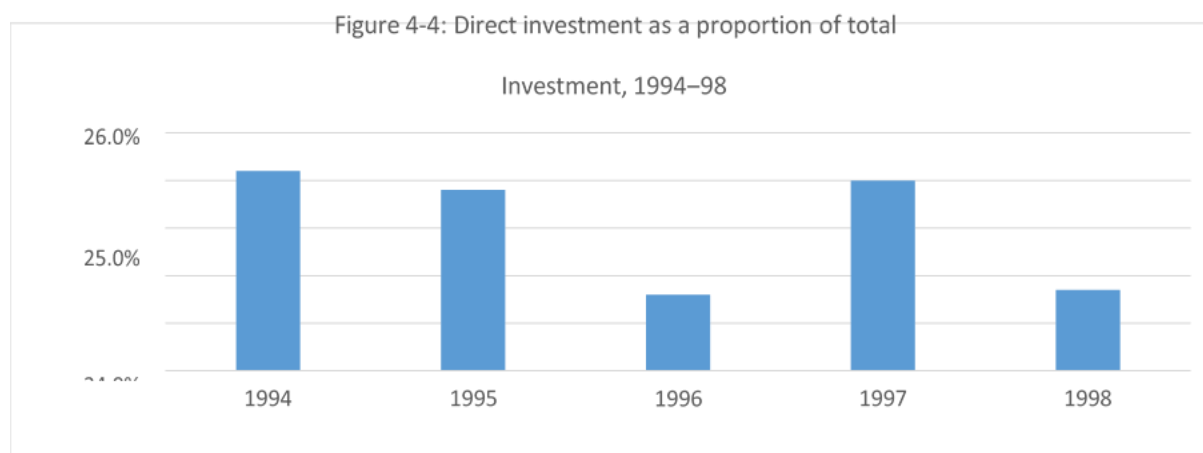
<sup>451</sup> SAIRR, 2017: 127.

Figure 4-2 illustrates the total number of housing opportunities available during Mandela's term. Applicants for government housing had to satisfy the following criteria: Married or with financial dependents; Citizenship or residence; Competent to contract; A monthly household income of below R3 500.<sup>452</sup> As can be seen from Figure 4- 2, the number of statesubsidised housing opportunities increased dramatically from 60 820 in 1994/95 to 209 000 in 1997/98.



**Figure 4-3: National Senior Certificate results compared, 1994–98,** Source: SAIRR (2017: 520)

Figure 4-3 indicates the proportion of pupils who passed the National Senior Certificate examinations between 1994 and 1998. There was a gradual decline in the number of successful examination candidates, which points to severe shortcomings in the country's education policy. This would help to perpetuate South Africa's high unemployment rate.



**Figure 4-4: Direct investment as a proportion of total investment, 1994–1998;** Source: SAIRR (2017: 138)

Figure 4-4 shows the level of direct investment as a proportion of total investment between 1994 and 1998. Direct investment is investment by foreigners in undertakings in South Africa which allows them to have (individually or collectively) 10% of the voting rights. Direct investment in

<sup>452</sup> SAIRR, 2017: 714.

South Africa remained at relatively low levels during Mandela's tenure and even declined slightly in 1998. It should be noted, however, that investment during this period was relatively stable, in contrast to the more pronounced decline witnessed in the 1980s, i.e. from 46.9% in 1980 to 24.0% in 1989).<sup>453</sup>

At first, COSATU and the SACP assumed highly influential roles in Mandela's administration. A number of SACP members were appointed to Mandela's government after the 1994 elections, which meant that the Alliance partner had considerable influence over government policy. COSATU, too, had a strong political voice within the Alliance, as demonstrated by the trade union federation convincing the ANC to implement the RDP macro policy after 1994.<sup>454</sup> The RDP included the rollout of housing to the poor – which is evident in the strong growth in subsidised housing in Figure 4-2. However, the RDP was quickly put aside to allow the introduction of GEAR (an early indication that the ANC would start to disregard its Alliance partners' input in the coming years).

GEAR required cuts in state expenditure which meant a reduction in the number of state employees. Driven to cut costs, the education department encouraged severance packages for teachers.<sup>455</sup> Consequently, the best teachers in the system took the offer – stripping the education system of its most experienced staff. GEAR, with its conservative economic policies, signalled the strength of the domestic business sector and corporate elites rather than the labour movement represented by left-leaning organisations like COSATU.<sup>456</sup>

#### 5.4 The Era of Technocracy: SACP and COSATU

Thabo Mbeki succeeded Mandela in 1999 and was later re-elected in 2004 with nearly 70% of the votes. With his re-election, Mbeki shifted the policy emphasis from revolution and racial reconciliation to economic growth and administration – much to the dismay of the ANC's Alliance partners.<sup>457</sup>

Both COSATU and the SACP felt increasingly alienated by the neoliberal shift on the part of government, the dissolution of the RDP as a ministry and the adoption and continuation of GEAR.<sup>458</sup> COSATU, committed to fostering socialism, opposed Mbeki's support for GEAR and in late 2001, the trade union federation embarked on a general strike for the purpose of

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<sup>453</sup> SAIRR, 2017: 138.

<sup>454</sup> Legassick, M. 'The Past and Present Role of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC' in Liebenberg, I. et al (eds), *The Long March: The Story of the Struggle for Liberation in South Africa*, pp. 173-186.

<sup>455</sup> ANC (African National Congress). 2000a. *Tasks of the NDR and the mobilisation of forces*.

<sup>456</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>457</sup> ANC (African National Congress). 2007a. *52nd National Conference: adopted strategy and tactics of the ANC*.

<sup>458</sup> *Ibid.*

halting the government's neoliberal macroeconomic policies. According to COSATU's then general- secretary, Zwelinzima Vavi, the ANC leadership had betrayed the liberation movement and only capital, a growing but small black elite and the mostly white official opposition supported GEAR.<sup>459</sup>

With relations between COSATU and the ANC deteriorating under Mbeki, the trade union federation started to move closer to the SACP and openly supported Jacob Zuma who was facing charges of corruption.<sup>460</sup> In July 2007, Mbeki warned the SACP and COSATU at the ANC Policy Conference that they should not tell the government what it should and should not do. Mbeki went on to say that the ANC was not a socialist party and suggested that the SACP toe the line or leave the Alliance.<sup>461</sup> The growing divisions within the Tripartite Alliance prompted COSATU and the SACP to campaign vigorously for the removal of Mbeki and for Zuma to become party president.<sup>462</sup> In the run-up to the ANC's 2007 National Elective Conference in Polokwane, Vavi criticised the ANC's draft policy documents, saying that the documents implied:

*“...there was nothing wrong with market- driven capitalism so long as capitalists are encouraged to behave ethically and not seek selfish advantages.”*<sup>499</sup>

According to Vavi, the documents trivialised the class struggle, ignored workers' contributions to economic wellbeing, and gave the ANC no proactive role in strategy and policy development. Mbeki's turn to neoliberalism ultimately led to his forced retirement at the 2007 National Elective Conference and the election of Zuma.<sup>463</sup>

## 5.5 Technocracy Era and Economic Policy

During Mbeki's term, from 1999 to 2007, the economy grew by an average annual rate of 4.1%.

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<sup>459</sup> Filatova, I. 2012. The lasting legacy: the Soviet theory of the National-Democratic Revolution and South Africa. *South African historical journal*, 64(3):507-537.

<sup>460</sup> Bob Hepple, *Young Man with a Red Tie: A Memoir of Mandela and the Failed Revolution, 1960–1963* (Johannesburg: Jacana, 2013)

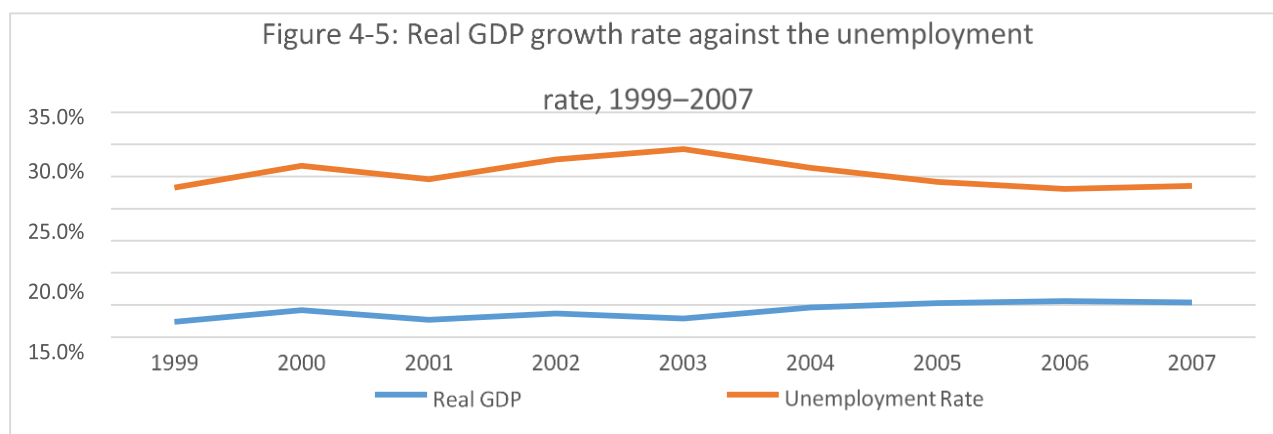
<sup>461</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>462</sup> *Ibid.* <sup>499</sup>

*Ibid.*

<sup>463</sup> Bratton, M. & Van De Walle, N. 1998. *Democratic experiments in Africa: regime transitions in comparative perspective.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

The proportion of pupils in public schools who passed the National Senior Certificate examinations in 2007 was 65%, which was a significant improvement from 49% in 1999.<sup>464</sup> Unemployment increased slightly from 23.3% in 1999 to 23.6% in 2007. However, between 2004 and 2007, South Africa's economy grew by 5.2% while unemployment showed a small but consistent decline each year, from a high of 26.4% to 23.6%.<sup>465</sup> This demonstrates that the South African economy has to grow by at least 5% for employment to decline consistently. Households with no access to electricity declined from 38.9% in 1999/2000 to 18% in 2007/08, while investment increased from R268.7 billion in 1999 to R523.3 billion in 2007.<sup>466</sup> A number of charts are provided below to demonstrate how the South African economy performed during Mbeki's tenure.



**Figure 4-5: Real GDP growth rate against the unemployment rate, 1999–2007;** Source: SAIRR (2017: 82–286)<sup>467</sup>

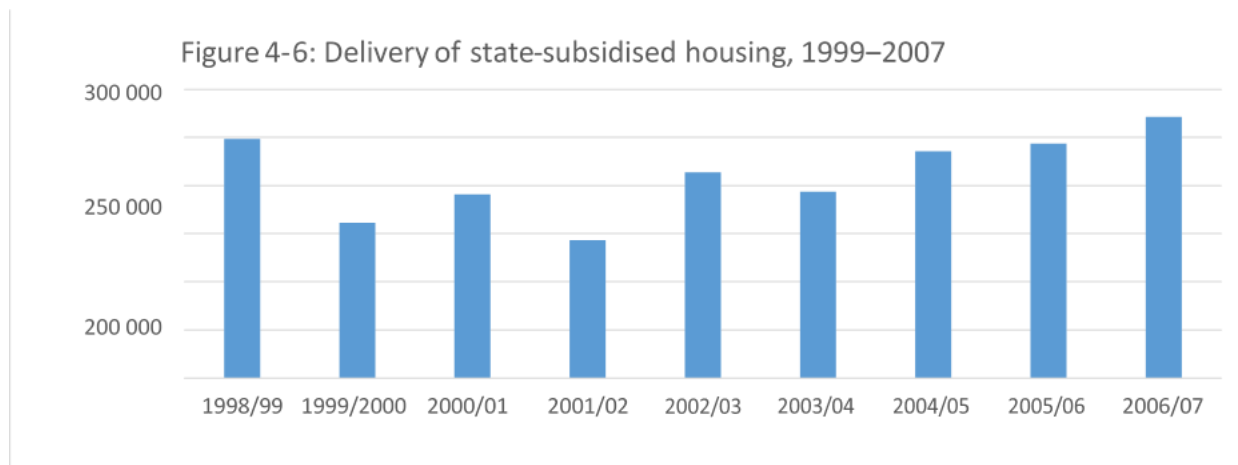
Figure 4-5 demonstrates a near mirror image of economic and employment trends in the country between 1999 and 2007. GDP growth was reaching levels above 5% before the global financial crisis struck in 2008. After 2003, unemployment showed a general decline.

<sup>464</sup> SAIRR, 2017: 520.

<sup>465</sup> SAIRR, 2017: 286.

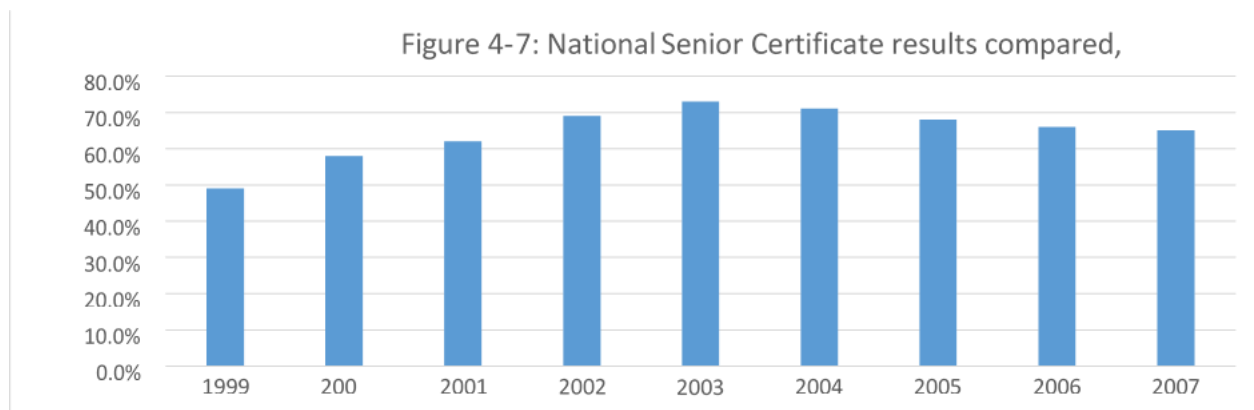
<sup>466</sup> SAIRR, 2017: 127.

<sup>467</sup> SAIRR, 2017: 82–286.



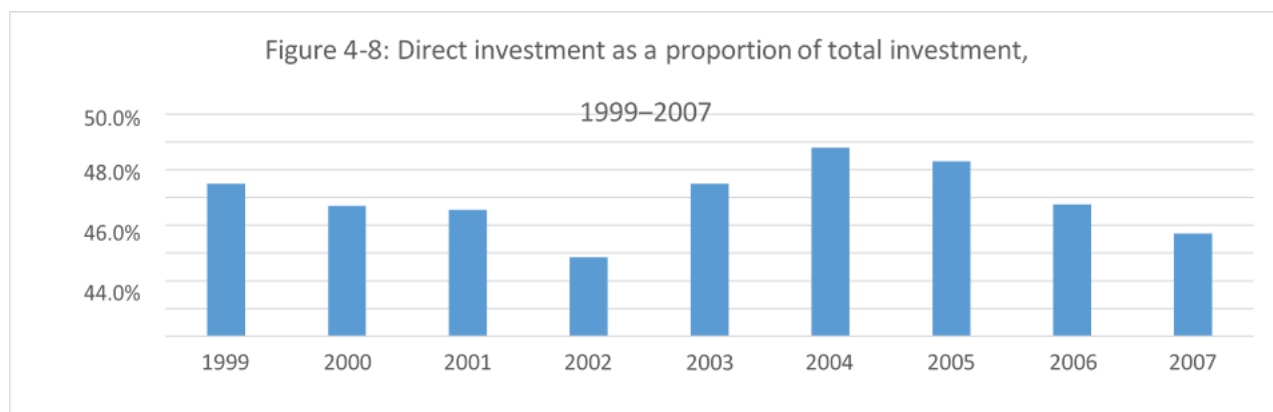
**Figure 4-6: Delivery of state-subsidised housing, 1999–2007**, Source: SAIRR (2017: 713)

Figure 4-6 illustrates that under Mbeki, the number of housing opportunities declined in the period 1999/2000 to 2003/04, from a high of nearly 250 000 in 1998/99. However, the number of opportunities increased again from 2004/05 onwards.



**Figure 4-7: National Senior Certificate results compared, 1999–2007**, Source: SAIRR (2017: 713)

Figure 4-7 illustrates the matric pass rates for pupils in public schools during Mbeki's tenure. The matric pass rate rose steady from 1999 to reach a high of over 70% in 2003 before steadily declining again to 66% in 2007.



**Figure 4-8: Direct investment as a proportion of total investment, 1999–2007;** Source: SAIRR (2017: 138)

Figure 4-8 shows the level of direct investment (investment by foreigners) as a proportion of total investment during Mbeki's tenure. Compared with investment performance when Mandela was in office, Mbeki's administration oversaw a considerable increase in investment after 1999. According to the SA Reserve Bank, the large increase in South Africa's foreign liabilities in 1999 and 2000 was due to the transfer of the primary listing of certain companies from the Johannesburg Stock Exchange to the London Stock Exchange.<sup>468</sup> It should be noted that direct investment levels were relatively stable under Mbeki, in contrast to the decline in investment that has been witnessed during Zuma's tenure. It is worth noting that COSATU's and the SACP's endorsement of Zuma emphasised their declining influence under the Mbeki administration. Mbeki and other members of the state elite were confronted by two opposing sets of interests: on the one side, the needs of the broader citizenry who were represented by COSATU and the SACP, and who demanded poverty alleviation and transformation; and on the other side, foreign investors and the domestic business community who advocated for policies that would ensure privatisation, deregulation, financial and trade liberalisation, and low budget deficits.<sup>469</sup>

GEAR, under Mbeki's watch, broadly catered for the investment and business communities' requirements. Another macroeconomic strategy, launched in 2005 during Mbeki's tenure, was AsgiSA, under whose guidance the state would utilise parastatals to drive social transformation.

The years following the introduction of AsgiSA saw economic policy drift further to the left, with a focus on a state-led infrastructure development drive.<sup>470</sup> Yet fiscal and monetary policy under the Mbeki administration remained conservative, with an emphasis on small national deficits and inflation targeting. Both GEAR and AsgiSA went against the nationalisation of

<sup>468</sup> SAIRR, 2017: 139.

<sup>469</sup> Legassick, M. 'Review: Science and South Africanism': White 'self-identity' or white class and race domination?', *Kronos*, Vol. 33 (November, 2007), pp. 258-278.

<sup>470</sup> *Ibid.*

the economy as propagated by the Freedom Charter – a document endorsed by both COSATU and the SACP. Although the influence of COSATU and the SACP was reduced during Mbeki's term, the Alliance partners did play a significant role in ousting Mbeki by supporting Zuma.

## 5.6 The Era of Populism: SACP and COSATU

Mbeki's failure to finish his term and have his preferred presidential candidate succeed him ultimately stemmed from his having increased the powers of central government over the provinces and the executive branch over Parliament, while essentially dismissing the ANC's Alliance partners and their demand for a more radical policy approach.<sup>471</sup> Mbeki's actions stifled debate and competition within the party and increasingly bulldozed provincial, parliamentary and branch-level decisions and activities, which led to growing discontent.<sup>472</sup> Furthermore, Mbeki's goal of keeping the deficit and inflation rate low, along with his pro-business stance, were particularly disconcerting to COSATU and the SACP. Because of Mbeki's autocratic style of leadership, provincial and branch leaders rallied around Zuma, with his home province – KwaZulu-Natal – leading the pro-Zuma faction.<sup>473</sup>

COSATU and the SACP, along with the ANCYL, committed to support Zuma as they believed he was the "champion of the poor and the dispossessed" and thus a proponent of socialism. According to Kane-Berman,<sup>474</sup> the marginalised Alliance partners saw Zuma "*as a unifying symbol of the downtrodden, the oppressed and the excluded*". Tensions within the Alliance came to a head when Mbeki dismissed Zuma from his position as deputy president in the face of allegations of corruption.<sup>475</sup> Zuma's supporters believed that the act of dismissing Zuma had little to do with the corruption allegations and was rather an attempt by Mbeki to prevent him from becoming the next president. With the backing of COSATU and the SACP, Zuma won the leadership battle at Polokwane in 2007 which led to Mbeki resigning from his position in September 2008.<sup>476</sup> Following his election to the position of president of South Africa in 2009, Zuma awarded government positions to COSATU and the SACP, which included appointing Ebrahim Patel, the general-secretary of the Southern African Clothing and Textile Workers' Union (SACTWU), as Minister of Economic Development.<sup>477</sup>

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<sup>471</sup> Feinstein, A. 2007. *After the party: a personal and political journey inside the ANC*. Cape Town: Jonathan Ball.

<sup>472</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>473</sup> Kennett, P. 2008. *Governance, Globalisation and Public Policy*. Edward Elgar. United Kingdom.

<sup>474</sup> Kane-Berman, J. 2011. *Revealing the master plan: what the ANC has in store for South Africa*.

<sup>475</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>476</sup> Southall, R. and Webster, E. 2010. "Unions and parties in South Africa: Cosatu and the ANC in the Wake of Polokwane." in Beckmann, Björn, Sakhela Buhlungu and Lloyd Sachikonye (eds.). *Trade Unions and Party Politics: Labour Movements in Africa*. Pretoria: HSRC Press. Cape Town

<sup>477</sup> *Ibid.*

## 5.7 Zuma and the shift to the left

According to Landman, economic policy under the Zuma administration has seen a gradual shift to the left. Such a shift is reflected in the following:

- The introduction of the Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP) by the Department of Trade and Industry.<sup>478</sup> IPAP promotes government intervention and a trade policy aimed at stimulating industrial development and export diversification.
- Ebrahim Patel's release of the New Growth Path, an economic plan that envisages a greater role for the state in managing the economy. The New Growth Path identifies key sectors for job creation, such as infrastructure, the agriculture value chain, the mining value chain, the green economy, the manufacturing sector, tourism, and various other, high-level services. Based on the opportunities presented by these sectors, the plan analyses and makes recommendations in respect of the policies and institutional arrangements needed to take advantage of said opportunities.<sup>479</sup>
- Blade Nzimande's expressed concerns about affordable tertiary education and the need to rebuild the post-secondary training and college sector to absorb millions of unemployed young people who are not in university.<sup>480</sup>
- The approval by the Cabinet of the National Health Insurance (NHI) White Paper. In essence, the NHI is a proposed health financing system that will pool funds in order to provide access for all South Africans (irrespective of their socioeconomic status) to quality, affordable personal health services. One of the features of the NHI is that it will be established as a single fund which will be publicly administered and publicly owned.<sup>481</sup>
- The number of social grants paid out since 2010 having surpassed the number of people who are employed.<sup>482</sup>
- The release of the Expropriation Bill which Zuma referred back to Parliament in February 2017 for public consultation.<sup>483</sup> The bill makes provision for property (both fixed and movable) to be expropriated for a public interest and for a public purpose. There is uncertainty, though, over the capacity of the new office of the valuer-general, which is key to the passing of the Expropriation Act. Looking ahead,

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<sup>478</sup> Landman, J.P. 2014. ANC Indaba: hits and misses.

<sup>479</sup> IMF, 2014: 50.

<sup>480</sup> Landman, J.P. 2014. ANC Indaba: hits and misses.

<sup>481</sup> South Africa, 2017: 9.

<sup>482</sup> SAIRR, 2017: 664.

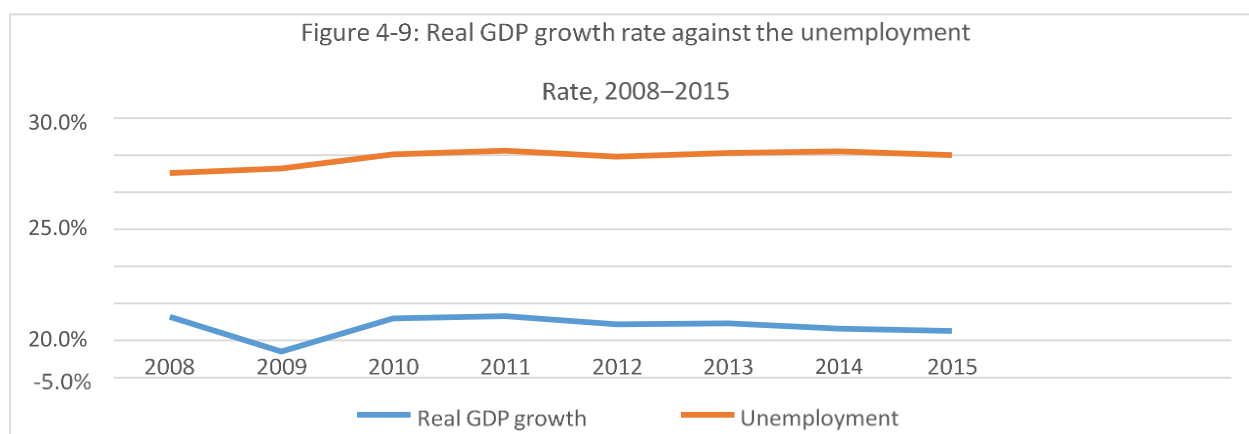
<sup>483</sup> Stephen Ellis, "Nelson Mandela, the South African Communist Party and the origins of Umkhonto we Sizwe", *Cold War History* Vol. 16, Iss. 1, 2016.

there are fears that large-scale expropriation could be used to accelerate land reform.<sup>484</sup>

Clearly, the left-leaning Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP), New Growth Path and other initiatives are aimed at creating an environment where small and medium-sized enterprises can grow (thus reducing inequality) and primary industries such as agriculture and mining (where most of the semi-skilled and low-skilled workers are found) can become sources of more value-added and better paid work for those who have been marginalised.<sup>485</sup> In all of this, the government has a central role to play, from identifying economic sectors with job creation and export potential, to assuming more control over the land use and distribution process.

## 5.8 Populist Era and the Economy

Zuma became president during the global financial crisis and although the South African economy recovered somewhat in 2009, low growth became the norm from 2013 onwards. Between 2008 and 2015, the South African economy grew by an average annual rate of 1.9%.<sup>486</sup> The proportion of pupils in public schools who passed the National Senior Certificate examinations in 2015 was 71%, an improvement from 63% in 2008. The proportion of households with no access to electricity declined from 17.4% in 2008/09 to 13.9% in 2013/14. In addition, investment increased from R590.4 billion in 2008 to R638.4 billion in 2015. However, unemployment increased from 22.6% in 2008 to 26.6% in 2016 – a 13-year high.<sup>487</sup>



**Figure 4-9: Real GDP growth rate against the unemployment rate, 2008–2015; Source: SAIRR (2017: 82–286)**

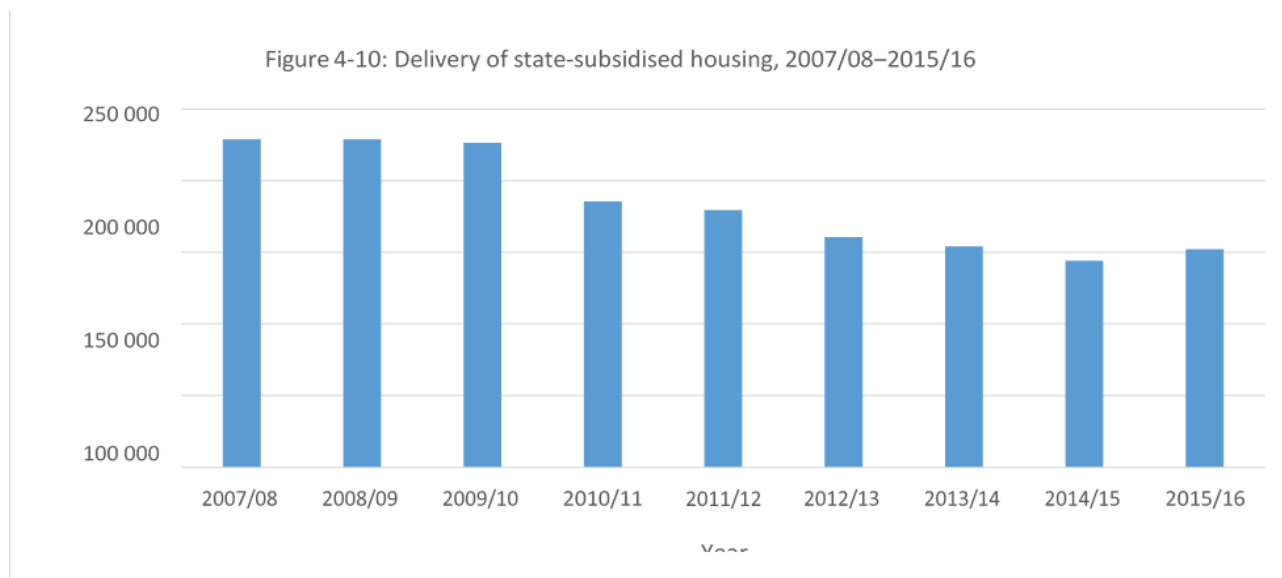
<sup>484</sup> Ibid.

<sup>485</sup> Landman, J.P. 2014. ANC Indaba: hits and misses.

<sup>486</sup> SAIRR, 2017: 83.

<sup>487</sup> SAIRR, 2017: 286.

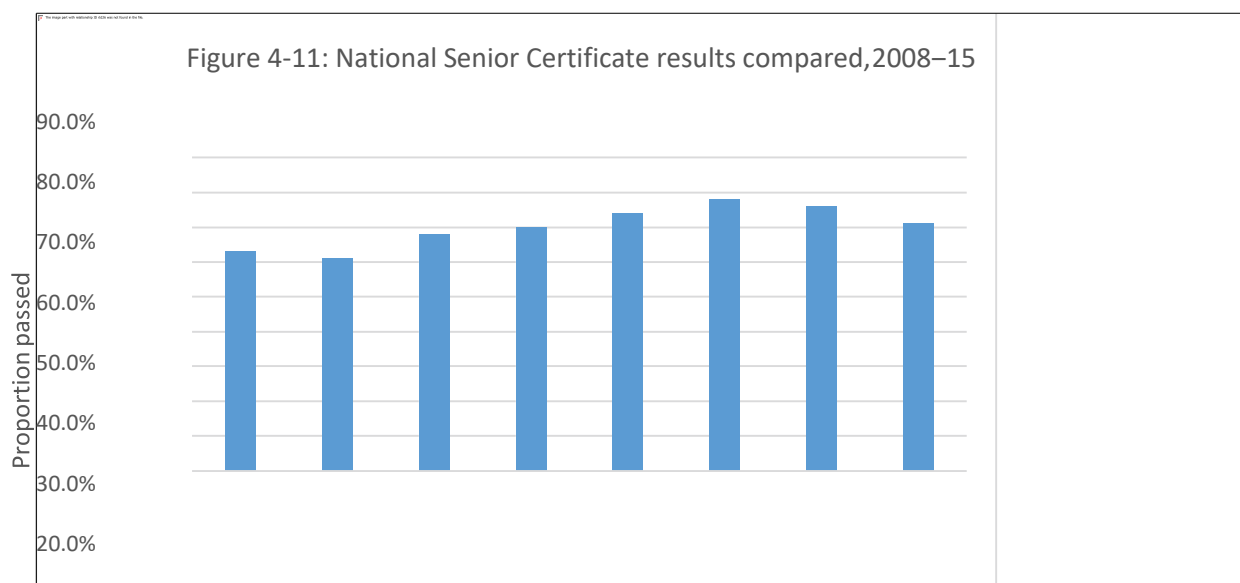
Figure 4-9 shows that South Africa initially recovered from the global financial crisis of 2008–09, with economic growth climbing in 2010 and 2011. However, growth has since then been on a slow decline, dropping every year since 2013.<sup>488</sup>



**Figure 4-10: Delivery of state-subsidised housing, 2007/08–2015/16; Source: SAIRR (2017: 713)**

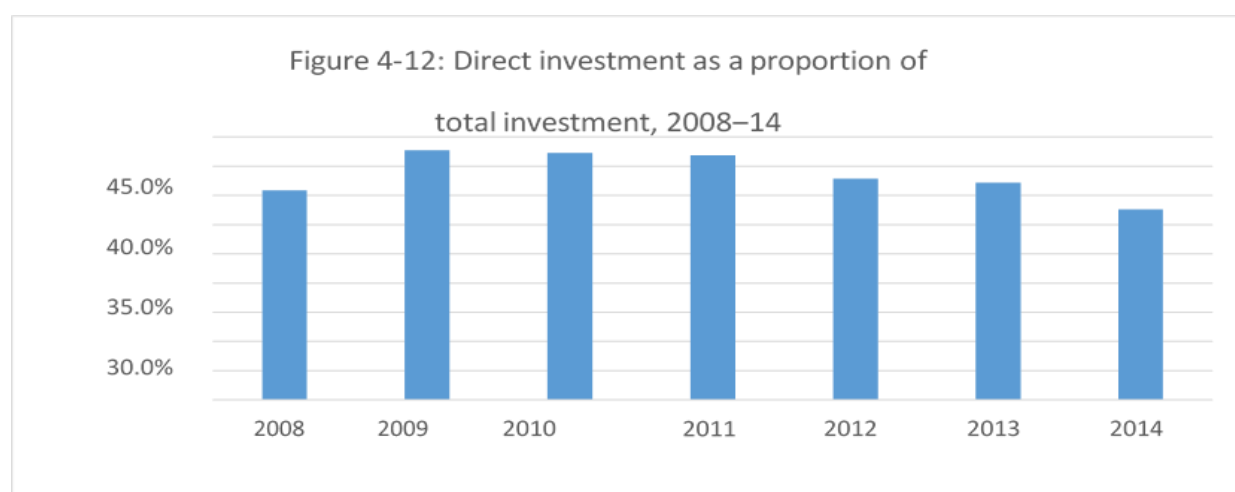
Figure 4-10 shows the total number of housing opportunities available from 2007/08 to 2015/16 during Zuma’s presidency. There has been a steady decline in the number of housing opportunities during this period. This could be due to generally weak economic conditions in the country since 2013 which has put pressure on the state’s finances and its ability to deliver services.

<sup>488</sup> SAIRR, 2017: 82–286.



**Figure 4-11: National Senior Certificate results compared, 2008–2015;** Source: SAIRR (2017: 520)

Figure 4-11 indicates the proportion of pupils who passed the National Senior Certificate examinations between 2008 and 2015. Although this proportion increased steadily from 2008 to 2013, thereafter there was a gradual decline which coincided with weak economic growth<sup>489</sup>



**Figure 4-12: Direct investment as a proportion of total investment, 2008–2014;** Source: SAIRR (2017: 138)

Figure 4-12 shows the level of direct investment as a proportion of total investment between 2008 and 2014. Whereas direct investment stabilised during the Mbeki presidency (with figures mainly above 40% and in one year reaching a peak of nearly 50%), there has been a noticeable and consistent decline since Zuma took office in 2009. It could be deduced that shrinking direct

<sup>489</sup> SAIRR, 2017: 82–286.

investment signals the fleeing of capital due to concerns about Zuma moving away from the economic conservatism that had characterised Mbeki's presidency.

## 5.9 Political uncertainty and Economic Consequences

The last few years of Zuma's second term have been marred by persistent allegations of corruption and infighting within the Tripartite Alliance. Early in 2016, the Constitutional Court ordered Zuma to pay for the non-security upgrades at his homestead in Nkandla, as remedial action recommended by the previous public protector, Thuli Madonsela.<sup>490</sup> The non-security upgrades included a visitors' centre, a swimming pool, an amphitheatre and a chicken run, for which – according to a report submitted by the National Treasury to the Constitutional Court – Zuma would have to pay R7.8 million. Zuma also faced calls for his resignation in January 2016 following his decision to fire the then Minister of Finance, Nhlanhla Nene, in December 2015.<sup>491</sup> A severe backlash from the markets, South African civil society as well as members of his own party forced Zuma to replace his preferred candidate for the position of Finance Minister, Des van Rooyen, with the more respected Pravin Gordhan.<sup>492</sup>

However, in March 2017, Zuma proceeded to fire both Gordhan and his deputy, Mcebisi Jonas, replacing them with Malusi Gigaba and Sifiso Buthulezi as the new Finance Minister and Deputy Finance Minister, respectively. This drastic move saw the value of the South African rand drop overnight from R13.26 to R13.47 to the US dollar.<sup>531</sup> The fact that South Africa has had four finance ministers in such a short period has prompted international rating agencies such as Fitch and Standard & Poor's to downgrade the country's investment grade to junk status. In the face of the downgrade to junk status, a rise in government debt-servicing costs can most certainly be expected.<sup>493</sup> This will have a serious knock-on effect as the government will have less money to channel towards critical services such as housing, education and sanitation.<sup>494</sup> Cutting back on expenditure on critical services will only exacerbate social instability in the country as more people will protest over the lack of service delivery.

The international credit rating agencies, Fitch, Standard & Poor's and Moody's, have expressed their concerns about Zuma's Cabinet reshuffles and what the effects are likely to be on fiscal

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<sup>490</sup> Filatova, I. 2012. The lasting legacy: the Soviet theory of the National-Democratic Revolution and South Africa. *South African historical journal*, 64(3):537-548.

<sup>491</sup> Stephen Ellis, "Nelson Mandela, the South African Communist Party and the origins of Umkhonto we Sizwe", *Cold War History* Vol. 16, Iss. 1, 2016

<sup>492</sup> *Ibid.* <sup>531</sup>

*Ibid.*

<sup>493</sup> Iheduru, Okechukwu C. "Black Economic Power and Nation-Building in Post-Apartheid South Africa." *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 42, no. 1 (2017): 1.

<sup>494</sup> *Ibid.* <sup>534</sup>

*Ibid.*

discipline and economic growth. Another major area of concern for the rating agencies is South Africa's state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and the numerous bailouts that they have required, particularly South African Airways and Eskom.<sup>534</sup> Fitch, in particular, suspects that Gordhan was fired because of his efforts to improve governance and transparency at the SOEs and his doubts about the affordability of the proposed nuclear programme.

The former public protector, Thuli Madonsela, discussed the reasons for Nene and Gordhan being fired and why the rating agencies are concerned about South Africa's SOEs in her *State Capture* report. Based on the report's findings, Madonsela recommended that Zuma establish a judicial enquiry to probe allegations of improper conduct and the excessive influence that the wealthy Gupta family appeared to have over the presidency.<sup>495</sup>

The controversial Gupta family is accused of using their power and connections to influence the appointment of Cabinet ministers and senior officials to head the country's SOEs so that they can benefit from these appointments. Some of the highlights of the *State Capture* report are as follows:

- “Zuma and ANC secretary-general Gwede Mantashe took an interest in the appointment of [parastatals] board members. President Zuma took an interest in the appointment of board members at Eskom and Transnet, whereas Mr Mantashe was interested in the appointment of board members at Transnet.”
- “Jonas, in his discussion with Finance Minister Gordhan about the Guptas offering him Nene's job, stated that they [the Guptas] informed him they made R6 billion from the State and wanted to increase it to R8 billion. The family apparently also said they can report ministers who refuse to take their orders to their superiors to deal with them.”
- “The report confirmed that Cooperative Governance Minister, Des van Rooyen, was at the Guptas' Saxonwold compound the night before he was appointed Finance Minister on 9 December 2015...”
- “Ajay Gupta apparently said Treasury was a stumbling block; he needed to get rid of its director-general, Lungisa Fuzile, and other key officials.”<sup>496</sup>

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<sup>495</sup> Letsoalo, Matuma and Nosimilo Ndlovu. "Fear the Wrath of the Poor--Cosatu." Mail and Guardian Online, July 26, 2016.

<sup>496</sup> Ibid.

## 5.10 Rejecting Zuma administration and second shift to the left

Divisions between the ANC and its Alliance partners were reinforced during COSATU's nationwide May Day rallies in 2017 as Zuma and his allies were heckled and booed. During COSATU's main Workers' Day celebrations in Bloemfontein, Zuma was met with hostility as COSATU members chanted anti-Zuma songs in his presence.<sup>497</sup> In fact, anti-Zuma sentiment was so high that the federation was forced to prematurely end the event and all speeches were cancelled.

Meanwhile, ANC national chairperson, Baleka Mbete, presented her speech in Durban while the crowd chanted "Gupta" despite attempts by SACP second deputy general- secretary, Solly Mapaila, to calm the crowd. ANC deputy secretary- general, Jessie Duarte, was booed at a gathering in Polokwane when she was introduced.<sup>498</sup> Cyril Ramaphosa, on the other hand, received a warm welcome from COSATU members as he delivered his speech in Nkomazi, Mpumalanga. At the COSATU rally in Gauteng, general-secretary Bheki Ntshalintshali confirmed that they would campaign to ensure that Ramaphosa becomes president, stating that: "We as the workers want Cyril Ramaphosa to be President, we will elect him in December."<sup>499</sup>

Although COSATU played a major role in ensuring Zuma was elected ANC president in 2007 at the Polokwane Elective Conference, COSATU has switched its allegiance and is now actively calling for Zuma's resignation. Among the factors that have contributed to the increasingly strained relationship between the presidency and the ANC's longstanding Alliance partner, the SACP, are: Zuma going ahead with a series of sudden Cabinet reshuffles over the past couple of years without consulting COSATU; Zuma ignoring the federation's calls for the e-toll system in Gauteng to be scrapped and the use of labour brokers to be banned nationally; and Zuma failing to implement more radical changes to the economy.<sup>500</sup>

In a similar display of discontent with the Zuma administration, the SACP barred Zuma from attending and speaking at its 14th National Congress in 2017. The SACP had informed the ANC that they would prefer someone other than Zuma to address its congress.<sup>501</sup> Solly Mapaila said:

*"We had initially invited the ANC and left it to them to decide who should attend. We felt appropriately that we needed to inform the*

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<sup>497</sup> Ndlovu, Nosimilo and Niren Tolsi. "Bling on the ANC Ivy League." Mail and Guardian Online, July 6, 2017. <http://www.mg.co.za/article/2017-07-06-bling-on-the-anc-ivy-league> (accessed July 10, 2017).

<sup>498</sup> Ndlovu, Nosimilo and Niren Tolsi. "Bling on the ANC Ivy League." Mail and Guardian Online, July 6, 2017. <http://www.mg.co.za/article/2017-07-06-bling-on-the-anc-ivy-league> (accessed July 10, 2017).

<sup>499</sup> Ibid.

<sup>500</sup> Ibid.

<sup>501</sup> SACP, 14<sup>th</sup> National Congress, 2017.

*ANC that perhaps any other delegate could be much better than...sending the president who we have asked to step down” .<sup>502</sup>*

COSATU, the SACP and former president of the ANCYL, Julius Malema, have all rejected Zuma and his faction within the ANC. It should be noted that those opposing Zuma are all far-left organisations. NUMSA is continuing to forge ahead with its creation of a worker’s party while the EFF has grown in every election in which it has campaigned. South Africa has also seen the rise of student protests across the country (some very violent) which can be interpreted as a response to what students believe are the excesses of the political elite while the average South African is facing a drop in living standards and dwindling meaningful economic opportunities. Nkandla was cited as a bloated and ineffective public sector, and numerous bailouts of state-owned-enterprises as a worrisome trend, set against the backdrop of rising university fees which prevent many young black South Africans from accessing the opportunities that would lift them and their families out of poverty.<sup>503</sup>

### **5.11 White monopoly capital**

A few months before the staging of the ANC’s National Elective Conference, a policy conference is held to prepare draft policy resolutions following thorough debates.<sup>504</sup> Some might argue that the policy conference is treated as a prelude to the party’s leadership race. At the 2017 policy conference, the contentious issue of ‘white monopoly capital’ was debated and it is the researcher’s opinion that this debate was used as a means of determining the influence of the different factions within the ANC.<sup>505</sup>

The two main presidential candidates, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma and Cyril Ramaphosa, took opposing views regarding the term ‘white monopoly capital’. Pro-Ramaphosa provinces such as Gauteng and the Western Cape argued that monopoly capital has no specific racial characteristic.<sup>506</sup> Pro-Dlamini-Zuma provinces such as KwaZulu-Natal and the Free State argued, on the other hand, that monopoly capital should be called white monopoly capital. However, nine out of the eleven commissions concluded that the phenomenon of white monopoly capital is a global one and manifests differently in various parts of the world.

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<sup>502</sup> Ibid.

<sup>503</sup> World Bank. “A Decade of Measuring the Quality of Governance. Governance Matters 2017: Worldwide Governance Indicators, 2007-2017. Annual Indicators and Underlying Data.” Washington, D.C: World Bank, 2017.

<sup>504</sup> Vladimir Shubin, “ANC: A view from Moscow” (Second Revised Edition), (Jacan: Johannesburg, 2008)

<sup>505</sup> Ibid.

<sup>506</sup> Butler, Anthony. "How Democratic is the African National Congress?" *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21, no. 5 (2017).

## 5.12 Is the ANC neoliberal or socialist?

To reiterate, the ANC's ideological roots can be found in the objectives espoused in the Freedom Charter. Both of the ANC's Alliance partners endorse the provisions of the Freedom Charter and base their political views on far-left ideologies. Even though there has been a gradual shift to the left under the Zuma administration, ANC economic policy has up to this point remained largely neoliberal. This is reflected in the following developments in 2017:

- Speaking to investors at the Development Bank of Southern Africa in Midrand, new Finance Minister, Malusi Gigaba, eschewed Zuma's 'radical economic transformation' catchphrase and instead opted to use the term 'inclusive growth'.<sup>507</sup> Echoing Pravin Gordhan's previously expressed views on the matter, Gigaba's 'inclusive growth' reference would definitely sit well with asset managers. Furthermore, Gigaba managed to secure further investor confidence by stating that policy was "unlikely to change" and that the medium-term budget remains the same. *"I have given the guarantee that on the level of government, we are completely committed to the previous policies and programmes"* said Gigaba.<sup>508</sup>
- Gigaba released his 14-point programme in July to wrench the economy out of recession. Gigaba's plan includes the sale of 'non-core' assets and partial privatisation of state-owned entities (SOEs).<sup>509</sup> African Business Index analyst on African governance, Versi, Anver, said: *"The last time I heard the ANC even talk about privatisation or the sale of state-owned assets of any kind was when Thabo Mbeki was president"*.<sup>510</sup> The government previously sold its stake in mobile phone company, Vodacom, in 2015 as part of a R23 billion capital raising exercise for Eskom. Similarly, the government is considering selling its multi-billion rand stake in Telkom to bail out another SOE, South African Airways (SAA).<sup>511</sup>

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<sup>507</sup> Butler, Anthony. "How Democratic is the African National Congress?" *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21, no. 5 (2017).

<sup>508</sup> World Bank. "A Decade of Measuring the Quality of Governance. Governance Matters 2017: Worldwide Governance Indicators, 2007-2017. Annual Indicators and Underlying Data." Washington, D.C: World Bank, 2017.

<sup>509</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>510</sup> Versi, Anver. "The Ibrahim Index on African Governance." *African Business* no. 332 (2017): 11.

<sup>511</sup> *Ibid.*<sup>552</sup>

*Ibid.*

- Current public protector, Busisiwe Mkhwebane, proposed changing the South African Reserve Bank's (SARB) mandate of maintaining currency and price stability,<sup>512</sup> saying that the Bank's mandate should include improving socioeconomic conditions in the country. If this proposal had been accepted, it would have interfered with the independence of the Reserve Bank. However, Gigaba came to the Reserve Bank's defence, saying that the Bank does not protect the currency for its own sake but rather to ensure balanced and sustainable economic growth.<sup>512</sup> Gigaba went on to challenge Mkhwebane's proposal and instructed that her report, on which her proposal was based, be taken on review.

With the second jump to the left, the Alliance partners of the ANC and various groupings outside the Alliance are now actively promoting leftist and anti-corruption policies. Lately, the ANC has gone through a tumultuous time as different factions have campaigned aggressively for their preferred candidate to be elected the party president in December – all while the country is immersed in its second recession in less than 10 years.

Elections since 2006 have highlighted the ANC's slow electoral decline, with the municipal elections in 2016 showing the ANC taking a record low of around 54% of the votes. Add this to COSATU's and the SACP's rejection of Zuma and the ANC finds itself losing support on both fronts (internal and external). This has prompted several ANC politicians, especially from the Zuma faction, to regularly resort to populist rhetoric in an attempt to ratchet up support for the ruling party. At the NEC lekgotla, Zuma expressed his desire for ANC policies to be implemented immediately, including those aimed at spurring on radical economic transformation. Zuma's preferred presidential candidate, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, also pushed for radical economic transformation at the Progressive Professionals Forum event in August 2017 when she said:

*“Radical economic transformation is nothing new. The land is nothing new, the wars of dispossession went for centuries because our forebears knew that land was an asset. Just in the Eastern Cape, they (forebears) fought for 100 years for land, but this time we are not going to fight for it. Our forebears sacrificed and lost their lives so that now we can be able to get it (land) in a civilised manner...Radical means real change, it's a break from the past. Our*

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<sup>512</sup> Butler, Anthony. "How Democratic is the African National Congress?" *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21, no. 5 (2017).

*colonisers saw us as people who must go and get water and wood for them, and gave us education to take command and not graze in the green pastures. They saw Africa generally and South Africa in particular as a supplier of raw materials. Our economy is mainly like that: supplier of raw materials”.*<sup>513</sup>

Mineral Resources Minister, Mosebenzi Zwane, declared at a business breakfast held by the Black Business Council (BBC) that radical economic transformation can no longer be delayed and that it is a painful but necessary process.<sup>514</sup>

Further rhetoric and populist dialogue surrounds the issue of land. Speaking at the National House of Traditional Leaders in March 2017, Zuma commented that the Constitution needed to be changed to allow for the restitution of land without compensation.<sup>515</sup> ANC branches in KwaZulu-Natal have also emphasised the need for land reform without compensation. Provincial chairperson, Sihle Zikalala, said that their branches want leaders who will not be apologetic about the expropriation of land without compensation. *“I know for a fact that branches of KZN want leaders who will expropriate land for [the] people”.*<sup>516</sup>

### 5.13 Conclusion

Populist rhetoric, including calls for radical economic transformation, came out of different corners of the ANC. For example, ANC branches throughout KwaZulu-Natal, the Minister of Mineral Resources and Zuma himself agitated for radical economic transformation and land expropriation without compensation. It could be concluded that the ANC showed signs of shifting more to the left of the economic spectrum. In 2017 the ANC member and Finance Minister, Malusi Gigaba, began to use the term *‘inclusive growth’* instead of radical economic transformation; released his 14-point programme which included partial privatisation of SOEs; and challenged the public protector’s report which proposed changes to the Reserve Bank’s mandate.

Although several radical land reform policy proposals were made, these policies, it could be argued, would not be implemented – rather, they were used as tools to attract voters who had become disillusioned with the ANC. Indefatigably, the ANC could be seen to have continued with its strategy of ‘talk left, but walk right’. The ANC appeared and still demonstrate

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<sup>513</sup> Ndlovu, Nosimilo and Niren Tolsi. "Bling on the ANC Ivy League." Mail and Guardian Online, July 6, 2017.

<http://www.mg.co.za/article/2017-07-06-bling-on-the-anc-ivy-league> (accessed July 10, 2017).

<sup>514</sup> Ibid.

<sup>515</sup> Versi, Anver. "The Ibrahim Index on African Governance." African Business no. 332 (2017): 11.

<sup>516</sup> Ibid.

commitment to mixed model of redistributionist and neoliberal policies, which place it in the economic liberals' camp. However, this could change if the Tripartite Alliance failed to unite behind one leader at the upcoming National Elective Conference in December 2017. The SACP and COSATU retained and still do so, their places at the far left of the economic spectrum known as the economic radicals' camp.

## CHAPTER SIX:

### REVIEWING AND REORGANIZING THE SACP

#### 6.1 Introduction

The first draft of the document regarding reviewing and re-organizing the SACP was unveiled at the Augmented Central Committee in 2014. It was then amended and circulated thereafter to Party structures for internal discussion. It was in preparation for the 3rd Special National Congress (July 2015) and the 14th National Congress (July 2017) in terms of the resolutions of the 13th National Congress (July 2012).<sup>517</sup> Such document remained incomplete and would be refined to become a Party Policy Paper following the 3rd Special National Congress. Marxism-Leninism taught the SACP three fundamental aspects of its spheres in nature, society and thought, and that these were always in a continuous process of change. The organisational review process recognised this reality. It accepted change as constant, continuous and inevitable. The posterity of the SACP was assured with this kind of exercises which necessitated frequent review and revisitation.

Political decay and ideological decadence necessitates radical changes in the way SACP approached social, economic and political matters as well as organisational life. While this held true in general, what necessitated this process in particular was succinctly captured above. A plethora of changes occurred not only in the broad National Liberation Movement but, in particular, the Liberation Alliance and the National Democratic Revolution (NDR),<sup>518</sup> as well as in society in general. Changes had an impact on the way the SACP was organised and did things. Some of the changes that occurred, however, were correctly campaigned for by the SACP.

The process of organisational review and reorganisation was therefore aimed at repositioning the SACP to keep pace with times and be responsive as effectively as possible to continuously changing conditions, both positive and negative. However, this process was, simultaneously, an opportunity to renew and wage a relentless struggle against its own weaknesses. Among others, through the review of Party organisation and the conduct of Party members at all levels including leadership levels. This included mining the ground in the broad movement to respond to any political decay and ideological decadence.

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<sup>517</sup> SACP: 'Consolidate Our Revolutionary Advances, Roll Back neo-liberalism and its anti-majoritarian agenda' Towards SACP 3rd National Special Congress, 2015

<sup>518</sup> Filatova, I. 2012. The lasting legacy: the Soviet theory of the National-Democratic Revolution and South Africa. South African historical journal, 64(3):507-537.

The SACP embarked on far-reaching programme in the context of the Centenary of the Great October Socialist Revolution (2017) and the Centenary of the SACP (2021).<sup>519</sup> This review process both celebrated these important milestones in the revolutionary working class struggles for socialism and the ultimate goal of communism and repositioned the Party organisationally for the advance to socialism. In the ultimate analysis, the SACP could be seen to be strengthening preparations and the struggle for deepening the NDR towards its logical conclusion, that of, the next democratic breakthrough, laying the indispensable basis for transition to socialism!

## 6.2 The organizational context

Towards its 13th Congress the SACP engaged in a series of debates. Through the Central Committee we processed discussion documents to prepare and develop the Party programme, the South African Road to Socialism (SARS).<sup>520</sup> Amongst the hotly debated issues were constitutional amendments which invariably began to reposition the Party, relevant to the new obtaining conditions of a Communist Party serving in governance – that is, in alliance with a progressive and militant trade union movement and a multi-class movement in, and leading, the government in a predominantly capitalist society. This further prompted the need to probe and discuss the relationship between the working class and state power, contributing to the well-known state power debate within the Party.

At the core of these debates were how to relate to both the state and state power in dealing with what is arguably one of the most intricate and complex revolutionary processes. The 12th Party Congress (2007) had resolved this matter by re-affirming that the state under capitalist production relations is contested.<sup>521</sup> The Party, therefore, agreed to actively participate in the democratic state institutions and processes to contest all its trajectories in favour of the working class, and not leave this key site of power uncontested to bourgeois dominance. This was guided by the Medium Term Vision (MTV) of the Party following its 1st Special National Congress (2005).<sup>522</sup>

In its assessment of the first decade of our transition to democracy, the Party concluded that the bourgeois had benefitted the most in economic terms. This despite the many major social advances and the rights that the overwhelming majority of the working class had achieved for the first time. In its collective wisdom, the Party arrived at the MTV, which declared that, if things are to change, going forward there must be no single centre of power in our society which

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<sup>519</sup> Posel, D. 'The Apartheid Project, 1948-1970', in Ross R. et al (eds), *The Cambridge History of South Africa: Volume 2, 1885-1994* (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

<sup>520</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 1962. *The road to South African freedom*.

<sup>521</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 1989. *The path to power: programme of the South African Communist Party as adopted at the Seventh Congress, 1989*.

<sup>522</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2002. *The current phase of the National Democratic Revolution*.

must be allowed to exercise that power without the presence, input, influence and the impact of the working class.<sup>523</sup> Characterising its leadership, the Party summed up its task in tilting the balance in favour of the working class, as that of building working class power and hegemony in all key sites of struggle and power: the overriding goal of this review process.

In order to carry out this task, the Party decided that its leaders must be released to serve in government based on continuous assessment and the need to strike a balance between all other key sites of in Party work, namely the state itself, the community, the economy, the workplace, the ideological terrain, the international terrain and the environment. The Party further agreed to create mechanisms for both their deployment and accountability, starting first with the establishment of the Deployment and Accountability Commission of the Central Committee.<sup>524</sup> The functioning, workings and effectiveness of the Commission and lower levels Deployment and Accountability Committees need to be improved. As part of the organisational review process the Party must develop guidelines in this regard.

The 13th Party Congress took the work step further. Through SARS it re-organised Party Organisation by: endorsing Voting District-based branches; expanding the Secretariat at the National and Provincial levels requiring one member of the Secretariat to be full-time; flexibly enlarging the size of District Executive Committees; recognising the coordinating functions of Sub-Districts; paying special attention to Party building, adding it as a full chapter in the Party programme; and providing for initiatives to strengthen the Head Quarters and the entire Party Organisation.<sup>525</sup> This re-affirmation of Party building as a critical political task was very important and sought to bridge the gap of a mistaken separation between organisational development and political programme.

However, the process was not concluded, at least to the satisfaction of the 13th Party Congress. Therefore the 13th Party Congress mandated the Central Committee to complete this task and report to the 14th Party Congress. Accordingly, one of the critical discussion documents of our 14th Party Congress will be on Party Organisational Review and Reorganisation. In this context, the 3rd Special National Congress is called upon to consider this present document and enrich it for that purpose, including, through resolutions both for immediate implementation and, equally important, resolutions for further consideration and ratification by the 14th Party National Congress.<sup>567</sup> The 14th Party Congress must finalise the work and complete this cycle of the process.

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<sup>523</sup> Rassool, C. 'Rethinking Documentary History and South African Political Biography', *South African Review of Sociology*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (2010), pp. 28-55.

<sup>524</sup> SACP, 12th Party Congress Resolutions, 2007; Marx, K. and Engels, F. *The Communist Manifesto* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969).

<sup>525</sup> Thomas, D.P. *The South African Communist Party (SACP) in the Post-apartheid Period. Review of African Political Economy*. Volume 34, Issue 11. *Debates on the Left in Southern Africa*. Canada: University of Victoria, 2007. <sup>567</sup> Thraves, A. 2012. *South Africa: workers confront brutal South African capitalism*.

The entire Party organisation is therefore required to continue the discussion on Party Organisational Review and Reorganisation beyond the 3rd Special National Congress taking into account its outcomes. This work must take place and be strengthened at the branch, district and provincial levels. It must continue to involve complementarity between bottom-up and top-down co-ordination and discussion as led by the 13th Congress Central Committee.<sup>526</sup>

This discussion document will be revised accordingly. The final Policy Position Paper, including where necessary constitutional amendments, must and will be finalised and adopted by the Central Committee for consideration by the 14th National Congress ahead of time. This had to be in terms of the relevant provisions of the Party constitution.

### 6.3 The broader political context

The imperialist offensive against its hegemony has heightened internationally. This offensive has become more aggressive here at home as elsewhere with overt and covert attacks directed at our National Liberation Movement, Alliance and its independent formations the SACP, ANC and COSATU, as well as associated autonomous structures. In particular, the SACP, the struggle for scientific socialism and communism, have been the most severely attacked, as the first target against the rest of our movement.<sup>569</sup>

The rest of our movement and various sectors of its organisation are facing serious challenges. The leading organisational component of the movement, the ANC, as well as the Party, are affected in various ways either directly or indirectly if not both. The trade union, students, youth, women and civic organisations are facing serious internal problems of organisation, unity and cohesion. They have, in general, been weakened and are struggling to regain their footing.<sup>527</sup> The causes of these problems include internally original dynamics and related contestations. But these not in isolation from the broader economic situation facing our country.

In particular, a significant part of the material basis of the problem lies in the economy, which is characterised by high levels of inequality, unemployment and poverty, but in which leadership positions in politics, proximity to the state and its links with business, including tenders, and politics-business and business connections, are seen as vehicles of upward mobility out of the bottom rungs of inequality, unemployment and poverty.

In the process, corruption has found its way and contaminates the DNA of many organisations, not least in our movement but as well as outside it.<sup>528</sup> The impact of external forces in

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<sup>526</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2012a. The battle of ideas. Umsebenzi online, 11(22), 14 Jun <sup>569</sup>  
SACP (South African Communist Party). 2012b. COSATU-SACP joint statement on bilateral meeting.

<sup>527</sup> Ibid.

<sup>528</sup> Stephen Ellis, "Nelson Mandela, the South African Communist Party and the origins of Umkhonto we Sizwe", Cold War History Vol. 16, Iss. 1, 2016

perpetuating the problems, manipulating the situation, exploiting it and deepening divisions for their own profit must not be neglected, undermined and underestimated.

To this end there have been visible class reconfigurations associated with a degeneration in the character of liberation forces mainly driven by, as stated, economic and social changes.

It is absolutely critical, therefore, that the process of Party Organisational Review and Reorganisation is not seen to be in isolation from the overall struggle to contest the direction of our society and its reorganisation as a result of capitalist accumulation, restructuring and deepening attempts at corporate capture of our state. In particular, the state-class relations must not be left out of sight.<sup>529</sup> The deepening attempts at corporate capture of the state and indeed even many organisations reflect an agenda, which in part is already entrenched and therefore accommodated in the tenderisation of the state, to embed the state even further in the capitalist class.

Post-1994, we also increasingly have a new- post liberation struggle generation. The statistical finding that unemployment mostly affects the youth means that this generation has a significant unemployment rate. In addition, it needs proper education, including political education and ideological training. Both energised and distressed, if not attended to this generation could become vulnerable to negative mobilisations and driven astray.

All of these necessitate adaptation and therefore changes to meet the demands of the continuously changing situation. One overriding objective must also be considered. This Party Organisational Review and Reorganisation takes place in the context where our Liberation Alliance converges on the need to pursue the second, more radical phase of our transition.<sup>530</sup> What type of the SACP and Alliance, as well as, therefore, the ANC and COSATU does the pursuit of the second, more radical phase of our transition require? This question must be answered sufficiently through this process of Party Organisational Review and Reorganisation.

Fundamental guiding pillars of the Party Organisational Review and Reorganisation process. Noting the inherent risk with any review process, the SACP organisational review process should be guided politically and ideologically and conform to basic Party principles and policies amongst which few are outlined below:

Commitment to the political programme of the Party and its strategic perspectives to deepen, defend and take responsibility for the NDR and build socialism in the context of our affirmation of Marxist-Leninist principles and guidelines.

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<sup>529</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2012a. The battle of ideas. Umsebenzi online, 11(22), 14 June

<sup>530</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2011b. 13th International Meeting of the Communist and Workers' Parties: Socialism is the future.

Unflinching commitment to our Revolutionary Alliance and its programme, the NDR, as a strategic posture and programme to drive, deepen, consolidate and advance the transformation of our society ultimately leading to the indispensable basis for ending all forms of exploitation. Re-affirmation of the Party principles, to mention just a few:

- a) Accountability of members and Party control;
- b) Democratic Centralism;
- c) Collective Leadership;
- d) Discipline and Self-Discipline;
- e) Loyalty to the Party and the people's revolutionary cause.<sup>531</sup>

#### 6.4 Towards a Framework

The process of organisational review, and the necessity to strengthen the SACP as a vanguard Party for socialism, cannot be divorced from the tasks that the SACP has set for itself in our own Political Programme, SARS.<sup>532</sup> Party Organisational Review and Reorganisation must also be based on a thorough analysis of the challenges facing our revolution, and the specific role of the SACP, now and in the coming period.

Guided by our own programme, building the organisational capacity of the SACP must also not be narrowly seen in terms only of the SACP organisational structures, but also the role of the SACP in building the capacity of the working class in general thus expressing our vanguard role properly. The capacity of the democratic developmental state we seek to build, capable of driving the goals of the NDR, a direct route to socialism, must, similarly, not be seen in isolation.<sup>533</sup>

It is also important that the SACP in this process takes a long range view of the challenges ahead, at least in the next 20 years, and adopt clearly defined targets and milestones in the struggle to build a socialist South Africa. For instance what would constitute either strict targets or irreversibles in the context of the NDR and related societal mobilisation and how best to lock these targets or milestones towards their achievement?

We need to build the Party in a much popular and simple way. This will make it attractive to the workers, the youth, women and sectors of our society that are not easily attracted to the

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<sup>531</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2009. Building working class hegemony on the terrain of the national democratic struggle.

<sup>532</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2011a. SACP message to SADTU NGC: Together let us build waking class power in society.

<sup>533</sup> Vavi, Z. 2011. Zwelinzima Vavi's address to the commemoration of the Cradock four.

Party programmes, let alone to understand it.<sup>534</sup> The first task in Party building is political, with clearly articulated principles, policies and general guidelines as the basis to unite our Party, cohere members and enhance its unity of purpose. The ideological training of members is the prerequisite of the political strength of the organisation and a critical requirement to fulfil this task.

To develop and train members correctly, we need to elevate the value of the Party constitution. The constitution itself must espouse the prime values of the Party, its ideology, succinctly, and be the central point of orientation of Party members. It must not be seen mainly and even only by some as a mechanical operational framework document. Neither must it be seen as a document simply used to resolve disputes.<sup>535</sup> The Party constitution must be more of a political and ideological document which guides members and the entire Party organisation. It must outline the expectations of Party from its members and outline their expected conduct as well.

The second primary task is adherence to implement the principle of Democratic Centralism as a pillar of Party building, unity and cohesion. We should therefore work to improve organisational systems and policies guiding Party operations and clarifying the process of accountability and control of members and leaders. Democratic Centralism should be utilised to deepen intra- Party democracy, coordination and guide Party members on the implementation of our programme.<sup>579</sup>

To do this we consider consolidating some work already done on Party building in terms of new methods of work and summaries to simplify the tasks and set parameters as we make organisational work exciting. The intention is that over time members can fully comprehend the basic tasks, pillars and the historic mission of the Party.

## **6.5 Pillars of Party building**

Follow the correct practice of Democratic Centralism, summarised below under ‘The Four Subordinates of Party Building’, under the following pillars.

- a. Develop the working class ideology of Party members.
- b. Unity of purpose and collective leadership.
- c. Organisational discipline, individual discipline and self-discipline.
- d. Constructive criticism and self-criticism as a critical method of constant improvement.

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<sup>534</sup> Stephen Ellis, “Nelson Mandela, the South African Communist Party and the origins of Umkhonto we Sizwe”, Cold War History Vol. 16 , Iss. 1,2016

<sup>535</sup> Trotsky, L. 1919. The history of the Russian revolution to Brest-Litovsk. Glasgow: The Socialist & Labour Press. <sup>579</sup> Thraves, A.2012. South Africa: workers confront brutal South African capitalism.

e. Follow the Party principles, uphold revolutionary morality and conduct.<sup>536</sup>

The Four Critical Subordinates of Party Building:

In carrying out the task of building the organisation and the deepening Democratic Centralism. There are at least four clear guidelines in this regard.

- a. The individual subordinates to the collective, and the collective respects the individual;
- b. The minority subordinates to the majority, and the majority respects the minority; factionalism is prohibited.
- c. The lower level structures subordinate to the higher level structures and leading organs, and the higher levels structures and leading organs listens to and respects the lower levels;
- d. The Central Committee subordinates to the Congress and the entire organisation subordinates to the constitution.<sup>537</sup>

If properly grasped by, these basic teachings will help, members to understand how the organisation functions, enhance discipline and consolidate unity and cohesion.

## 6.6 Building Tasks by Grass Roots Organs

To selflessly serve the community as the first task and priority, every Party member and particularly leader must have the inherent duty to build a constituency for the Party and its interventions in residential areas and relevant sectors where they are based in terms of other social activities. This must be considered as one of the principles in our fundamental criteria on what it means to be a communist and on performance assessment for members and leaders.

Recruitment and training of new members: a minimum of two years is necessary to train a comrade to meet acceptable requirements to service other members and serve the people at large in terms of Party principles.<sup>538</sup> Presently the Party constitution states that a person applying for membership will be an interim member for one year, while, among others receiving the necessary training. This requires the implementation of the Party programme on the institutionalisation of Political Education, which in turn requires institutional capacity building. The Chinese recruit and prepare a member for two years before deployment to any Party

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<sup>536</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2009. Building working class hegemony on the terrain of the national democratic struggle.

<sup>537</sup> SACP, 2008. The SACP and State Power. The alliance Post-Polokwane – Ready to Govern. SACP Policy Conference Discussion, Volume 7, Issue 1 September; The Communist International Between the Fifth and the Sixth World Congresses, 1924-8. London: Communist Party of Great Britain, 1928.

<sup>538</sup> Cronin. J 1992. 'The Boat, the Tap and the Leipzig Way', African Communist, 3rd Quarter.

structure. Special care is also given to the training of the Young Communists League members with more practical deployment in various tasks of Party work.<sup>539</sup>

Communication of Party decisions: this should not be a by the way issue. It is a fundamental requirement of Party building and is addressed in a separate internal Party document. How to resource the Party: This is a critical area of work and needs urgent attention if we are serious about Party building. What are the appropriate legitimate forms of raising funds to meet the daily tasks of Party building, campaigns, programs and operations?

## **6.7 Accountability and Expanding various Fronts of Party Building**

Advance good activism: the Three Signs of a Good Party Activist: In our communities we need to identify what are the major challenges confronting the people and define the subsequent Party tasks to rally them around and mobilise interventions. In this respect, each branch and Party unit at various levels should identify their immediate tasks and confront them. The following Three Signs of a Good Party Activist are essential in this process, all Party members must be oriented and must orientate themselves accordingly:

Visit the people in their homes through proper arrangements to talk to them and share ideas. Invite them to collective or community mass meetings to share in solutions of their common problems. Do not impose your views!

Be informed and inform the people about our revolution and its work, successes and challenges. Essentially account to the people truthfully – NO SPIN. So arm yourself with correct information and be truthful.<sup>540</sup>

Be with the masses and rooted in your community by serving them, take up community issues and engage relevant authorities and work with them for solutions. If there are intransigent authorities, lead the people against that intransigence. In order to earn leadership from the people Party cadres must adhere to:

The Tenets of Party life

1. Live modestly and honestly – live a simple life.
2. Be a good example, as stated in terms of the good servant of the people, of solidarity, humility, empathy, etc.

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<sup>539</sup> YCL (Young Communist League). 2011. The current situation and political tasks of the youth. YCL National Congress political report. African Communist, 1st Quarter (183).

<sup>540</sup> Zedong, M. 2009b. Collected writings of Chairman Mao, Volume 2: Guerrilla warfare. El Paso TX: El Paso Norte.

3. Always be part of the community's search for solutions and its solutions. Be there for the people, not absent!
4. All of these must be steered in the historical mission of the Party which is to fight and defeat the capitalist system and end all forms of exploitation and replace it by building a socialist transitional society towards communism.<sup>541</sup>

## 6.8 Deepening Women Mobilization

Women are already themselves been mobilised and have for decades of our struggle been in all trenches. There is a need, however, for this role to be supported and given space to prosper. The Party and its cadres must lead by example in deepening this mobilisation. The Party must also ensure that in its leadership ranks the minimum requirements prescribed in its constitution to achieve redress in terms of gender parity do not become maximums, and therefore stagnant.<sup>542</sup> We must organically move beyond those minimums and not simply adhere to them for compliance purposes.

All of the Party cadres, both men and women, need to be equally sharpened in terms of political education and ideological training. However, in recognition of the patriarchal history, nature and character of our society and the negative impact on women, who have been placed in the receiving end of many social problems, the Party must strengthen its focus on women and women leadership in political education and ideological training. This itself as part of our affirmative strategy to achieve redress.<sup>543</sup> This approach must apply in our attitude to the development of societal leadership.

All of the above must be complimented by increasing focus on women organisation and buttressed by intensified Party mobilisation against patriarchal and unequal power relations between men and women.

In the context of its work on the youth, the Party must particularly increase its focus on young women, who, also need to be self-sufficient, and who need to swell the ranks of our revolution for their own emancipation.

## 6.9 Developing Mechanism and Setting Basic Standards

What standards these should be and what should be the requirement of membership to the Party?

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<sup>541</sup> Woddis, J. 1972. *New theories of revolution: a commentary on the views of Frantz Fanon, Regis Debray and Herbert Marcuse*. New York: International Publishers.

<sup>542</sup> Pillay, S. 'Identity, Difference, Citizenship, Or Why I am No Longer a Non-Racialist' (paper presented to the 14th General Assembly, CODESRIA, May 2015).

<sup>543</sup> Ibid.

Should this change? Below we try to summarise some ideas around setting basic standards for membership:

Service to society as a prerequisite. This implies changing the way we recruit and admit new members into the Party by setting a new admission criteria, including service to the people, in particular, the workers and the poor. What must the criteria encompass?

Service to the Party and its members as a contribution towards party building. Members will be required to fulfil a number of free or voluntary hours to the Party at various levels as determined by the relevant Party organ under guidelines set by the Central Committee.

Tasking of all Party members by the relevant executive structures: the style of work of members who interface with the Party only at meetings must be abolished. All members must find a mechanism to contribute to Party life beyond participation in meetings. They should be tasked by the corresponding leadership to embark on Party work in their communities and/or in the sectors where they are based in terms of their respective social activities.<sup>544</sup>

The Party and various levels of Party organisation should study the local conditions, internalise and deepen the capacity for constant assessment of the realities facing communities. The Central Committee may develop such a broader framework to be adapted to the local conditions.<sup>545</sup>

We need to establish a fully-fledged Commission for Discipline and Revolutionary Morality in order to monitor, assess and enforce ideological, political, organisational and communist discipline within the ranks of the Party and society at large.

## **6.10 Raising the Bar of Service to the People**

All members should be raising the bar on service with regard, but not limited, to the following categories:

- a. Raising the bar of community service, service to members and the liberation forces.
- b. Raising the bar of leadership requirements for the party and the community.
- c. Raising the bar of example in the community and other spheres of social activity.
- d. Raising the bar of discipline, self-discipline, revolutionary morality and communist conduct.

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<sup>544</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2011c. Communist cadres in all fronts and terrains of struggle to build people's power for socialism

<sup>545</sup> Ibid.

- e. Raise the bar of the ideological requirements of Party membership and improve self-cultivation of members. This is a task of all cadres and structures alike.<sup>546</sup>

A good servant of the people: requirements and values. To fulfil this task of serving the people Party members must wholeheartedly give themselves to serving the working class. They must do so with, amongst others, the following distinguishable values:

- a. Solidarity
- b. Humility
- c. Empathy
- d. Dedication and
- e. Selflessness<sup>547</sup>

The articulation of these values is the most important one we need to deal with. The danger we have is the closeness of the livelihoods of many comrades and members of society to state jobs. We need to deal with that, set parameters and develop a code of conduct for Party leaders and members serving or working in the public service but as well as push for the development of our productive capacity – this perspective is elaborated in *Going to the Root* – our discussion document on the second, more radical phase of the NDR, its context, content and our strategic tasks. The risks of reliance of public service jobs and opportunities have deepened for our revolution in the context where the basic structure of our economy was not transformed and crisis levels of inequality, unemployment and poverty persisted.

We need to create a way by which we can defeat the ‘traders’ of influence and the influence that they have in determining the state of the movement through factionalisation in order to sustain lifestyles and guarantee job placements, contracts (i.e. mainly tenders) and other benefits. Ours is not the DA-type attack on the deployment of cadres.

We fully support cadre deployment and yet we need to address its unintended consequences that are damaging to the movement. In particular, to emphasise the point, we need transparent processes, procedures and institutional structures within our movement functioning under the highest executive authority on the selection, preparation, selection, deployment, accountability and control of cadres as well as a comprehensive code of conduct for them. In brief, we must assert the collective nature and character of these functions.

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<sup>546</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2011a. SACP message to SADTU NGC: Together let us build waking class power in society.

<sup>547</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2011c. Communist cadres in all fronts and terrains of struggle to build people’s power for socialism

Deployment of any member must not depend on any one person in any component and at any layer of, who then dispenses patronage and factionalises our state of, organisation. Particularly at sub-national levels this has proven to be one of the serious problems we must deal with. We must deal with patronage and factionalism and confront these in the same way as we must ruthlessly deal with corruption without fear or favour.

At local government level, the involvement of communities in selecting leaders must be deepened under proper leadership. In general, the work of all public officials and representatives must be open to public scrutiny and assessment. Mechanisms to give effect to this organisationally and protect the process of manipulation are required in a long run so that reliance is not placed on established public institutions only.<sup>548</sup>

The need to assert the new standard of revolutionary morality with a much deeper content, for instance, the values of serving the people: we must combat transactional relationship with the people that do things because the person is paid for the job and often that person does not see the essential content of the work as serving the people. Communist cadres need to lead in the example of service to the people.

### **6.11 The three ‘Firsts’ of Party Membership**

The following, referred to as ‘The Three Firsts of Party Membership’ must constitute the first three and standing tasks of all Party members, new and old:

- a. Serve the People First.
- b. Serve the Revolution First.
- c. Serve the Party First.<sup>549</sup>

#### Task of newly recruited members

We need to revisit the question of interim members and their role in Party life during the interim period (already the issue of probation has been touched herein). Many branches have just recruited members without taking them through induction programme and systematic political education and ideological training.

New members should be encouraged and assisted to read and learn more about the Party, the Alliance and its formations and about Marxism-Leninism as the base of their communist activity. The Party must constantly run political schools at all levels without exception. We

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<sup>548</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2009. Building working class hegemony on the terrain of the national democratic struggle.

<sup>549</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2011b. 13th International Meeting of the Communist and Workers’ Parties: Socialism is the future.

must be a learning Party, and a teaching Party, a Party of action, all in all, a Party of theory and practice.

We have not done well to integrate new members into our methods of work. Most just follow the flowing waters.<sup>550</sup> We need to insist on community tasking as an integral component of the new membership requirement and improve the work of integrating new members to Party building tasks. Political education and ideological training remain essential in this respect.

We should further explore and relook at the appropriate form of training for new members and the content of teaching and learning to be covered, whilst not taking away community tasking as an important introduction to Party work.<sup>551</sup> Interim members should be deployed to basic Party tasks under the supervision of a full member and the relevant executive organs as a way of introduction to Party life and activities.

There is an issue that relates to the politicisation of the members of the Party. It might be simpler to measure certain things. For instance what does it mean to be a member of the Party besides memorising this or that Communist literature or attending a meeting or action programme? The assessment tool that must be developed should take into account this aspect. But at the core of this process is the development of the quality of a cadre required by the Communist Party.<sup>552</sup>

In addition, we need to meticulously enforce constitutional requirements of probation for eligibility and election in the leading organs of the Party at all levels as well as public representatives. We must combat the juniorisation of the leadership ranks of the Party.

Juniorisation of the leadership ranks of the Party, often against its constitutional prescripts, is a recipe for patronage, factionalism and the collapse of quality and therefore the cause of degeneration in the leadership of the Party. The leading organs of the Party must be a vanguard in themselves and compose of the most enlightened of Party cadres who must be steeled in its history, Marxism-Leninism.<sup>553</sup>

## **6.12 SACP, youth and the Young Communist League**

As the ANC Kabwe Conference held in 1985 observed:

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<sup>550</sup> Ibid.

<sup>551</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2011c. Communist cadres in all fronts and terrains of struggle to build people's power for socialism

<sup>552</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2011b. 13th International Meeting of the Communist and Workers' Parties: Socialism is the future.

<sup>553</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2009. Building working class hegemony on the terrain of the national democratic struggle.

*“The young and rising generation constitutes a representative of the future in the broadest sense; the future of any society depends on the practical and spiritual moulding of the youth. Classes and strata act not only for their own good but also for the good of their rising generation. The youth grows and is moulded within a specific social environment – be it in the comfort and sleek surroundings of the capitalist home, school and boardrooms, the squalid conditions of the working class ghetto, the backward and wretched environment of the rural poor, or the confines of a petty-bourgeois upbringing.*

*The stage of youth is one of assimilating knowledge of all kinds. Avidly searching for a rational understanding of the surrounding world, the youth therefore displays curiosity, rebelliousness, impassioned and uncontrolled enthusiasms; it quickly forms judgements as it abandons others. Such a stage is crucial in the moulding of stable social being; thus all classes and strata wage relentless battles for the hearts and minds of the youth.*

*The youth is as enthusiastic in its search for knowledge as it is militant in the fight for the realisation of the ideals it holds dear. Having evolved an understanding of the ‘right and the wrong’, it displays great zeal and verve in fighting for what it conceives as just. Within the different class formations it acts as a powerful driving force, a dynamo of the class, national and international battles. It is to be found in the front trenches of practical and theoretical struggles displaying both initiative and self-sacrifice.*

*Due to their inexperience and illusions bred of their psychological make-up, young people can be easily swayed into positions that are counter to their interests. Thus a young worker could seek false comfort by abstaining from class battles or even by joining the exploiter’s state machinery. Not seldom, young people are enticed en masse to adopt social and cultural value systems alien to their interests.”<sup>554</sup>*

The enormity of dealing with these challenges cannot be left to the youth movement alone – including the YCL. As Kabwe further asserted:

*“All societies in general, and classes in particular, pay special attention to the youth. For any people or class to shirk this responsibility is to do great harm to itself. This applies particularly*

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<sup>554</sup> ANC Kabwe Conference, 1985.

*to peoples struggling to break the shackles of oppression and exploitation. No revolution can be victorious without the effective education, organisation and mobilisation of the youth into political action. It is none other than the youth (especially the working youth) who form the core of the 'political' and 'military' armies of the revolution. Their youthful energy enables them to perform great feats in the theatre of battle; their vigour enables them to be the most active transmitters of ideas and skills; their zeal spreads into their surroundings like wild-fire. The youth acts as such not as a separate contingent vis-à-vis the motive force of the revolution, but as an integral part thereof. The struggles of the youth would not count for much if they were not linked to those of the working people. At the same time, the youth lends the revolutionary struggles this youthful vigour only if and when it enjoys the guidance and experienced tutelage of the older generation. This calls for a wise approach in dealing with the youth; a balanced and timeous combination of severity and patience, seriousness and good humour.”<sup>555</sup>*

The SACP has to develop measures to give effect to its tasks on the youth as succinctly summarised above. In particular, the Party must empower its structures to handle matters affecting the youth. We shall return to this. First we deal with relationship between the SACP and the YCL, a perennial issue that has for some time now required our attention.

In its message of support to the 13th Party National Congress, the YCL, represented by its National Secretary, had the following to say:

*“We are the YCLSA of the SACP. We are formed as a result of the constitution of the SACP. The dynamism of the relationship between the SACP and the YCL, its dialectic, constitutional, political and programmatic nature is what has made the YCL what it is, and similarly had an impact on the current and future nature of the SACP. If we are not close to the leadership and structures of the SACP, who should we be close to? ...We have a platform to engage with our leadership. In fact, the average age of the membership of the SACP is youth. We will never define ourselves outside of the SACP because we are the SACP and its future. If we oppose the SACP in order to prove our autonomy, which we have as an integral part of the SACP, we will end up veering towards the oppositionists just because people claim that we are not independent.*

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<sup>555</sup> Ibid.

*Comrade General Secretary, young people in the YCL understands that we will do what Lenin instructed us to do. Learn! Learn and Learn! We do not suffer from a political and ideological learning deficiency to the extent that to prove that we have learnt, therefore reduce our role being to fight with the SACP in front of a conflict hungry media.*

*We understand that that this factory called the YCL, this university of beautiful young reds, this training ground for a future and socialist South Africa, just like all factories it will have its own factory faults, just like all universities it will have its own drop-outs, but we do our best at all times to produce the best proof cadres to take the baton from this leadership collective into the future.*

*Many young people are gradually finding hope in both the SACP and YCL's slogans of "Socialism is the future: Build it Now" and "Socialism in our Lifetime". As more and more young people find themselves locked in a future without jobs, education, quality public healthcare; they realise that the nightmare of capitalism has to be brought to an end and that the future of socialism is inevitable."<sup>556</sup>*

This summarises the correct perspective on this organic relationship espousing the YCLSA as an integral organ and part of the SACP. This perspective must be strengthened and build into an unbreakable pillar of guidance for all YCL members in their relation with their Party as is with the Party members who should not even see the YCL at a distance but as part of their whole.<sup>557</sup>

The above eloquently captures the strategic objectives that the Party's organisational review process has to strengthen with regards to the relationship between the SACP and the YCL. The following observations and complementary tasks need to be undertaken as equally important.

There are YCL members who just participate in the activities of the YCL and not those of the Party. Whilst some belong to SACP branches and are active members there is no systemic link of Party and YCL activities. We need to consider this matter and actually elaborate what should be considered distinct Party tasks and functions to be undertaken by all YCL members beyond the general membership of, and the constitutional link with the Party. This notwithstanding, the following pledge is proposed for all YCL members. The youth pledge to:

- a. Serve the youth and the interests of young people;

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<sup>556</sup> YCL (Young Communist League). 2011. The current situation and political tasks of the youth. YCL National Congress political report. African Communist, 1st Quarter (183).

<sup>557</sup> Adams, S. Comrade Minister. The South African Communist Party and the Transition from Apartheid to Democracy. Huntington, NY: Nova Science, 2001.

- b. Serve the working class;
- c. Learn and work;
- d. Honour and respect fellow human beings;
- e. Sacrifice for the betterment of society.<sup>558</sup>

Empower Party structures to deal with youth matters

Therefore corresponding Party structures should give due regard to service the YCLSA at corresponding levels starting with attending and addressing political meetings of the YCLSA, share recent decisions of the Party structures, etc., thus providing general political and ideological guidance. This should happen constantly and not by chance, and should be seen in the context of intra-Party service.

In recognition of the fact that our population is:

- a. significantly made up of youth;
- b. many challenges facing our society are likely to be most felt among young people mostly from the working class background;
- c. it will be a strategic error to leave the Progressive Youth Movement including the YCL alone in relation to tackling those challenges, these would require the entire movement.<sup>559</sup>

The Party Programme states that the SACP itself must empower its own structures to deal with youth matters. This further considering that the overwhelming majority of the Party's membership is young.

In its reflection on the YCL, the Party Programme states that the organisation and communist education of all sections of the youth must be strengthened:

*“...with particular attention being paid to young workers, students, professionals, and marginalised and unemployed youth. One of the biggest challenges facing our country is to address the needs of the youth, and one of the best ways to do this is to challenge the influence of capitalist ideology, tenderpreneurship, drugs and alcohol abuse amongst the youth.”<sup>560</sup>*

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<sup>558</sup> YCL (Young Communist League). 2011. The current situation and political tasks of the youth. YCL National Congress political report. African Communist, 1st Quarter (183).

<sup>559</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2007b. The South African road to socialism: building working class hegemony, for a socialist orientated National Democratic Revolution

<sup>560</sup> Ibid.

The Party programme locates this in the context where ideological work among the youth to take active participation in the Progressive Youth Movement, the NDR and the struggle for socialism must itself be strengthened, and where the YCL serves as the preparatory school for the Party. In this regard the Party has the ultimate responsibility to ensure that its preparatory school functions effectively and achieves the impact that it re-established it for – the organisational review process must therefore streamline this principle in the definition of the relationship between the Party and the YCL.<sup>561</sup>

The Party needs to continue to strengthen the political and organisational relationship with the YCL. Every branch of the SACP should lead the process of forming a YCL branch where none exists, working together with the respective higher leading organs of the YCL. Where there is a YCL branch and no SACP branch exists, the YCL should, as one of its first tasks, and working together with the respective higher leading organs of the Party, similarly lead the process of launching an SACP Branch and immediately accept its political guidance.<sup>562</sup>

### **6.13 Organizational Review and the Alliance**

Whilst the SACP is an independent political party, it, at the same time, is part of the Alliance with the ANC and COSATU. However, the condition for engaging in strategic and tactical alliances is, first and foremost, a strong, independent SACP that is rooted within the working class and serves as the vanguard for socialism. This means that while strategic and/or tactical alliances are necessary in different phases of the struggle, the point of departure must always be to build the SACP as a strong, independent vanguard Party for socialism and the working class.<sup>563</sup> This attribute is fundamental for the Party if it were to achieve its programme of building working class hegemony and power and providing communist leadership in all key sites of struggle and power, including, alliance itself.

In this respect part of our own organisational review must also reflect on our Alliance, the challenges facing each of its components and the whole Alliance collectively. The period lying ahead will require more, rather than less, of our Alliance, in particular, but there will necessarily arise moments for some form of other alliance engagements in order to deepen the NDR and intensify the struggle for socialism.

The SACP must, in any case, as we have done with most of our campaigns, seek to forge relations with a wide range of social forces to advance particular goals during different phases

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<sup>561</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2008. The SACP and state power: the alliance post-Polokwane – ready to govern? Information bulletin for the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party, 7(1).

<sup>562</sup> YCL (Young Communist League). 2011. The current situation and political tasks of the youth. YCL National Congress political report. African Communist, 1st Quarter (183).

<sup>563</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2012b. COSATU-SACP joint statement on bilateral meeting.

of our revolution. Perhaps one of the weaknesses of many communist parties in the 20th century, especially those that were in power after the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917, was their inability to form genuine and organic alliances with a wider range of progressive social forces in their societies.<sup>564</sup>

The 13th Party Congress also spoke about the necessity to build the independent organisational presence and influence of the SACP in all the key sites of power. Whilst the SACP must strengthen our revolutionary Alliance, and must not seek to usurp the specific strategic roles of our Alliance partners, it must at the same time not allow its influence and hegemony to be only mediated by other alliance partners.<sup>565</sup> The Party cannot be subjected to the relationship with, for instance, the unions on the basis of financial relations.

In other words, the fact that we are in an alliance with COSATU must not mean that the SACP can only access organised workers through COSATU or its affiliates. The Party must have its own independent presence amongst workers, both organised and unorganised. What programmes do we need to undertake to fulfil this requirement?

Similarly, while continuing to deepen the alliance with the ANC and developing direction to the politically organised masses, the Party must, simultaneously, consistently and systematically build and develop independent working class and communist leadership of society as a whole in terms of our perspective of building working class power and hegemony.<sup>566</sup> Dialectically, this is important both for the SACP in, and for, the Alliance.

In line with the preceding points on COSATU and the ANC, we will have to carefully analyse the challenges facing our allies, and also better anticipate what kind of, for example, the ANC we are likely to have in the next 5, 10 or 20 years. Of course we are not spectators, we are part of the ANC, and we should also be engaged in an intense discussion on what kind of the ANC we would like to see over the next decade or so.<sup>567</sup> In addition, as an integral part our society as led by the ANC, that discussion is relevant even more relevant. What role can communists play to build such an ANC?

As part of addressing the issue, we have to undertake a basic SWOT analysis of the current conjuncture in our organisational review. For example one of the major opportunities to build

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<sup>564</sup> Stephen Ellis, "Nelson Mandela, the South African Communist Party and the origins of Umkhonto we Sizwe", *Cold War History* Vol. 16, Iss. 1, 2016

<sup>565</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2011a. SACP message to SADTU NGC: Together let us build waking class power in society.

<sup>566</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2012b. COSATU-SACP joint statement on bilateral meeting.

<sup>567</sup> COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions). 2012. COSATU responses to ANC discussion documents for the Policy Conference.

an even more radical ANC is the current commitment by the ANC to a second, more radical phase of our transition.<sup>568</sup> This, coupled with the current crisis of capitalism and the related crisis of neoliberalism, provides a fertile ground for an even more left-oriented ANC.

However, there is a persistent threat of the growth of a parasitic and compradorial bourgeoisie with access to government and the danger of such capturing the ANC and government. Elements of this parasitic (and not patriotic) bourgeoisie are the 1996 class project (which tried to legitimate being parasitic through narrow BEE) and the new tendency which sounded radical to hide their stealing from the state.<sup>569</sup> We must not underestimate the possibility of these strata closing ranks against the left, despite their own different factional interests.

Grappling with the above issue it may be necessary that we undertake some scenario planning as a component of organisational review. Although sometimes scenario planning has the undesirable effect of turning motive forces into spectators, we must avoid this by ensuring that whatever scenario planning we do is anchored on class analysis, rather than abstract speculation.

Organisational review processes must also be linked to the question of the SACP and state power discussion and process. It is important that the question of the SACP and state power is not tackled in isolation and independently from the task of building working class hegemony and power in all key sites of struggle and power. It must therefore not be separated from the task of organisational review.<sup>614</sup> It is important to try and settle this debate by pointing out that our ultimate goal is state power for the working class, and that the SACP, irrespective of the phase of our revolution, will always have a particular relationship to existing state power and its configuration, whether inside or outside government or both. The Party comes from, and must be rooted in, it must develop itself as the leading force of, the working class.

To remain relevant the SACP cannot afford to be a shadow of the ANC led liberation movement imposed by the current dispensation. The Party must engage the Alliance about its independent role in the context of consolidating, deepening and advancing the NDR, including, in expressing its own voice in parliament and legislatures within the framework of the alliance. What role should the alliance play in this regard? Could this critical matter be left to the goodwill of the ANC in the main and the Alliance in general? The SACP needs to take up the matter of the relationship with the state and the reconfiguration of the Alliance much more seriously. We cannot have a casual approach to a system of concentrated power in modern society such as the state.

Therefore the SACP should consistently engage with its own relations with the state and state power and utilise that to deepen relations with the ANC and the alliance components. We must

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<sup>568</sup> Ibid.

<sup>569</sup> Vladimir Shubin, "ANC: A view from Moscow" (Second Revised Edition), (Jacan: Johannesburg, 2008) <sup>614</sup> CU (Communist University). 2011a. Genesis of the NDR: National Democratic Revolution, part 2.

openly discuss our Party's relationship to the state and to the Alliance and pose the question, does the current relationship work for the struggles of the working class?

In undertaking organisation review it is also going to be important for the SACP to take full stock of the implications of the changing social composition of South African society, especially in the black majority. For instance, as the SACP we have correctly supported a number of important and progressive policies of the ANC- led government that have led to the significant growth of the middle strata.

The growth of black middle strata is an important achievement of our NDR. From all indications this stratum of our society is going to continue to grow. What kind of attitude and relationship should we seek to forge with the middle strata? For instance, components of the middle strata include professionals and small/medium enterprises. Some of our own campaigns (e.g. the financial sector campaign) have had huge resonance with significant sections of the middle strata, but we have not built on this.

Equally, we need to ask the question whether we have adapted well to the above mentioned changing class conditions in our society, within the working class, in the trade unions and indeed in the SACP itself and society at large. Subsequent to this we must reflect, also, on how we have responded politically to these developments? How has the changing class character and class reconfiguration of African communities impacted on us as the Party?<sup>570</sup>

A crucial component of SACP Organisational Review is the need to significantly increase the capacity of the SACP in the battle of ideas. This is perhaps one of our areas of weakness. No Communist Party can be able to advance the struggle for socialism unless it has significant strengths in the battle of ideas. For instance we have a significant shortage of writers and theoreticians; there is a paucity of Marxist- Leninist intellectuals in our universities and broader society.<sup>571</sup> Instead the small grouping of "Marxist academics" has been captured by the ultra-left, Trotskyite or other reactionary traditions. Our publications have very few comrades contributing.

In broader media work we were relatively weak and have recently had important improvements. There is still spacious room for improvement. We are also unable to exploit the space of social media to the fullest. A large part of our organisational review will have to focus on a concrete strategy on this front that will perhaps begin to yield some results in a decade or so, if we start addressing this in earnest from now.<sup>572</sup> One of the critical challenges is how do we can intensify

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<sup>570</sup> Duvenhage, A. 2009. Die ANC en die Nasionale Demokratiese Rewolusie: politieke- strategiese perspektiewe. Tydskrif vir geesteswetenskappe, 49(4):707-727; Gumede, W.M. 2005. Thabo Mbeki and the battle for the soul of the ANC. Cape Town: Zebra Press.

<sup>571</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2012a. The battle of ideas. Umsebenzi online, 11(22), 14 Jun

<sup>572</sup> Nzimande, B. 2011c. Skills development: a site of class struggle for dissent work. Umsebenzi online, 10(14), 6 Jul.

internal political education and writing skills, as well as effectively linking up with our higher education institutions to recruit and also train communist cadres on this front. A document entitled ‘Communication, Information and Media Strategy’ elaborating on these and other considerations has been developed for internal consumption.

#### **6.14 Political Education and Ideological Orientation**

We need to explore creative ways to integrate the Communists University or similar alternatives into the daily life of the SACP. In that regard, we perhaps need to look at bringing the Communist University more to the functional co-ordination of the Central Committee. The Party should strengthen the efforts and contributions of comrades who have managed to keep the Communist University alive and vibrant through stimulating engagements.<sup>573</sup> We need to ensure that all provinces in the long run are able to run their own chapters of the Communist Universities, including, in vernacular and popular languages of the people on the ground and even cascade it to the district level. But given that this is co-ordinated nationally we do not need to rush this aspect but pay special attention on content as it drives the organisational programmes through this medium.

We need to redefine the concept of Full Time Professional Revolutionaries in the concept of dedicated service to the people.

What are the structural and institutional forms and requirements of Party organisation? We have to focus attention on the efficiency, functionality and relevance of Party organisational structures, from national to branch level. We have to look at the structures of other communist parties, but at the same time structure our Party to suit our own tasks and material conditions.<sup>574</sup> This must include an assessment of whether our VD based branches are working, and a reflection on the capacity of our Party structures, especially at lower levels to effectively engage in Alliance, sectoral and mass work.

- a. If we say the SACP must be in all key sites of power and fronts of struggle, what kind of districts, branches, units and cells does this require?
- b. Presently the Party constitution provides for one form of units and does not provide for cells. Is this sufficient and flexible to different conditions, sectors and social settings?
- c. What organogram and what funding model is required of all these?<sup>575</sup>

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<sup>573</sup> SADTU (South African Democratic Teachers Union). 2009. National Democratic Revolution – introduction.

<sup>574</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2011b. 13th International Meeting of the Communist and Workers’ Parties: Socialism is the future.

<sup>575</sup> Ibid.

The Party constitution does not set boundaries for residential branches. This task is left to the Central Committee, which may set guidelines in term of the relevant provision of the Party constitution. However, the Party Programme, SARS, provides for Voting District based branches. At the 13th Party Congress which adopted the programme, it was resolved that Party organisation and the compositions of its leading organs, including the number of full time elected officials and executive members, must be flexible and fit in with corresponding conditions and the tasks facing the Party.<sup>576</sup>

Are there any further adjustments necessary in those respects? Further, there are differences in the characteristics of rural, urban and peri-urban areas; industrial, mining and agricultural areas; city centres, suburbs and townships, as well as in the respective geographical sizes of the wards and Voting Districts. There are Voting Districts in rural areas which are far bigger than wards in urban areas and rural wards that are even bigger than several wards in urban areas combined. In urban areas, Voting Districts are small and smaller than those in rural areas in terms of geographical sizes.<sup>577</sup> Also, while the Party Programme provides for Voting District Branches, it does not provide for organisational co-ordination at the ward level – which can be a political problem.

- a. How best should the Party recognise all these different characteristics through a differentiated system of branches, units and cells that is both flexible and responsive to the different local residential and workplace settings given the above considerations and examples?
- b. In areas where there are Voting District branches, what structural and co-ordinating mechanism should the Party adopt at a ward level bearing in mind the need for a common approach to common challenges which could face the whole ward, elections and alliance relations?<sup>578</sup>

The Do's and don'ts of Party members: The Party may consider during this review process to introduce the basic areas of the dos and don'ts of Party membership.

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<sup>576</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2011c. Communist cadres in all fronts and terrains of struggle to build people's power for socialism

<sup>577</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2011b. 13th International Meeting of the Communist and Workers' Parties: Socialism is the future.

<sup>578</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2011c. Communist cadres in all fronts and terrains of struggle to build people's power for socialism

- a. What should those be? We can outline through a discussion what should be associated with Party members and what should not be associated with them. For instance, can we have members who are criminals, who are corrupt, etc.?
- b. Equally important, what are the main features of being a Party member? What does it mean to be a Communist? Can we enforce the content of the answers to these questions as part of the critical requirements of Party membership and leadership?<sup>579</sup>

## 6.15 Lessons from China and Cuba

### *Communist Party of China (CPC)*

During the visit we learnt some important lessons on Party organization and even challenges faced by the socialist construction in the PRC. They are facing a similar challenge of compradorial bourgeoisie as we have here of the BEE groupings. This arises out of their own created socialist market economy and the consequence of unequal and unbalanced accumulation between the urban and the rural areas, even between the East and Western regions and amongst the people based on their deployment including Party cadres deployed in the private enterprises that have invested in the PRC.<sup>580</sup>

Nonetheless, the Chinese base their political posture, mainly, from their own research and internal capacity but also use the state institutions as those are under the leadership of the CPC with a nation that also accepts the overall leadership of the CPC. They have critical research capacity in the various organs of the Central Committee.<sup>581</sup> For instance, our Central Committee commissions would in their case be research units of the CC, which studies their particular sector and makes a presentation to the Secretariat and the PB for consideration by the Central Committee.

### *Structure of the Central Committee and its organs.*

The CC of the CPC remains a big political body of specialists in various fields. It has 205 members elected in the recent 18th Party Congress of November 14, 2012. It meets once in a year through a well-researched agenda of the plenary session. There could be other plenary sessions convened as the need arise during the year. Since the 18th Congress in November 2012,

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<sup>579</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2009. Building working class hegemony on the terrain of the national democratic struggle.

<sup>580</sup> SADTU (South African Democratic Teachers Union). 2009. National Democratic Revolution – introduction

<sup>581</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2011c. Communist cadres in all fronts and terrains of struggle to build people's power for socialism

the CPC Central Committee just convened only the 4th Plenary Session on the 1st week of October 2014.<sup>582</sup>

The Congress also elects 130 members of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection of the CPC. This body is responsible for overseeing cadres discipline and conduct, in line with but broader than the ANC Integrity Commission.<sup>583</sup> The Discipline Inspection has a Secretary and eight Deputy Secretaries and its own Standing (Working) Committee of 19 comrades.

The 18th Congress CC has 25 Politburo members. Only two are female. The PB elects a Seven members (07) Standing Committee of the PB of the 18th Congress of CPC Central Committee, all these members are full-time. They have the Office of the General Secretary with the General Secretary without any deputy.<sup>584</sup> They have Seven Members of the 18th CPC Central Committee Secretariat. These are full-time Central Committee members drawn from the PB and Standing Committee. This team oversees the overall daily affairs of the Party and the government.

Then they have the CPC Central Military Commission with the GS as the Chairman and two Vice Chairmen plus eight other members. The Central Military Commission is important in the context of the PRC because it is the body responsible for stable transfer of power in China. It is also important to note that in the PRC the CPC is the body entrusted with the ownership of the defence force.<sup>585</sup> Whilst the army belongs to the people of the PRC as a whole, it also belongs to the Party. It is a Political army and it is still called the People's Liberation Army.

### *Communist Party of Cuba (CPC)*

The CPC is also structured more or less the same as the Chinese model. The difference is that the People's Congress in China has a huge standing in society even though the Party role remains widely accepted as the vanguard of the Chinese society. The primary lesson from the Communist Party of Cuba, is that the majority of Party members are recruited from within the ranks of workers at the shop floor level through the Workers Assembly.

It is then that a member is identified in terms of his or her qualities and then referred to the Party for recruitment.<sup>586</sup> The Party will then conduct evaluation of the member's conduct and do neighbourhood assessment or interviews with the member including of his/her family, particularly of the spouse. The Cuban society is a workers' state, so the organisation of workers

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<sup>582</sup> NEHAWU (National Education Health and Allied Workers Union). 2006. National democratic revolution and socialism.

<sup>583</sup> Moore, D. 2009. South Africa's depression, the national democratic revolution and the developmental state, a development studies perspective. *Discourse*, 37(2):13-21.

<sup>584</sup> Priestland, D. 2009. *The red flag: a history of communism*. New York: Grove. Public Service Commission see South Africa. Public Service Commission.

<sup>585</sup> Nzimande, B. 2011a. Address of the SACP General Secretary to the 5th Central Committee of COSATU.

<sup>586</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2002. *The current phase of the National Democratic Revolution*.

at the shop floor is taken seriously and organised differently from those in the capitalist forms of production.<sup>587</sup>

In Cuba, the Workers Assembly is arguably the centre of pride of conscious socialist construction, solidarity and human service by workers. The other key example is the method of recruitment and probation. Similarities, with the two models are that, all the Parties have come to power through armed insurrection and could impose their own socio economic system and overall societal direction.

All the Parties have introduced the notion of probation for all members with an extensive training programme before members are allowed into Party life and system. This doesn't take away the variations and even betrayal by some members who underwent the probation process.<sup>588</sup> Members of these organisations follow the notion of the Party mass line. It is also important for the Party to revisit the notion of the mass line in the Party. We have observed that in all the Communist Parties in power that have survived the collapse of Eastern bloc socialism they have kept a basic coordination of the mass line concept and even in Cuba one of the standing pillars is the content of the Party mass line.<sup>589</sup>

The concept of the Party line has been a major issue for discussions within the communist movement for quite some time. The SACP does not necessary subscribe to this notion but practices the principle of democratic centralism which entails a dialectical combination of democracy and centralism involving 'Freedom of discussion, unity of action' (V.I Lenin, 1906; 'Report on the Unity Congress...': 'The Congress Summed Up').<sup>590</sup>

Some of the Marxist scholars like the Vietnamese revolutionary Le Duan have written extensively on the concepts with a deeper focus on the notion of the line and the cadre and the relationship between the two. The SACP may wish to develop on this literature as it seeks to perfect the system of Party organisation and streamline it in the organisational review process.<sup>591</sup>

Both are firm adherents of the democratic centralism system to unite the organisations and to govern society. They all have a quick system of communication with members in their thousands and millions within a short space of time. If these are amongst the core basis of what

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<sup>587</sup> Cohan, A.S. 1975. Theories of revolution: an introduction. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons.

<sup>588</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2007a. 12th National Congress Resolutions: communists to the front to build a better socialist world.

<sup>589</sup> Priestland, D. 2009. The red flag: a history of communism. New York: Grove. Public Service Commission see South Africa. Public Service Commission.

<sup>590</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2009. Building working class hegemony on the terrain of the national democratic struggle.

<sup>591</sup> Cohan, A.S. 1975. Theories of revolution: an introduction. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons.

pulls together and coheres these organisations, how do they relate to our weakness in building a strong and disciplined organisation able to lead the struggle for socialism.<sup>592</sup> On the international benchmarking we need to check which aspects of their work have been the most successful and why are they successful? It is obvious from the outside that some of the features of their success is institutionalisation of their work.

- a) They have full time revolutionaries. We had similar trends when we were outside and in Robben Island.
- b) The international experiences are but examples of what our peer organisations are modelled on and how they have over the years sustained growing Party organisations. We have to first consider the obtaining local conditions to ensure we have a suitable environment for what we deem universal and necessary to apply to our circumstances.<sup>593</sup>

What are the other questions we must respond to, or we need to emphasise? If we are to embark on a huge mass debate by our structures, we have to guide the process not exclusively but on strategic issues. We could even group the questions in the document to be produced according to some key themes and programmatic intents and postulates, namely strategic political and ideological questions, organisational design/modelling questions and organisational building and campaigns related questions. All of these must be considered as mutually reinforcing than exclusive.<sup>594</sup> Some of the questions we may consider as we prepare for the review process could amongst others include the following ten questions for example:

- a) What are the strategic political and organisational tasks facing the working class and the South African NDR in the current conjecture and what should be our political and organisational response?
- b) What should constitute the key tasks of Party building in each pillar of the SARS – namely in our communities, in the workplace, in the economy, in the state, the international terrain, the ideological terrain, the environment?
- c) What are the main challenges faced by a communist party in a capitalist society, that is in alliance with a multi class liberation movement and still remain committed to mobilising for

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<sup>592</sup> Filatova, I. 2012. The lasting legacy: the Soviet theory of the National-Democratic Revolution and South Africa. *South African historical journal*, 64(3):507-537.

<sup>593</sup> Ebenstein, W. 1973. *Today's ISMS, communism, fascism, capitalism, socialism*. Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice-Hall.

<sup>594</sup> Filatova, I. 2012. The lasting legacy: the Soviet theory of the National-Democratic Revolution and South Africa. *South African historical journal*, 64(3):507-537.

- socialism and how does it relate to the state and state power relations and how does this relation influence the organisational review process?
- d) How should we engage, attract and bring back the intelligentsia and academics, the White, Coloured and Indian working class and Professionals into the ranks of the revolutionary movement and principled left platforms?<sup>595</sup>
  - e) Is there inherent contradictions between a democratic developmental state and the mass movement characterised by heightened activism and how has the democratic movement and the Party responded to this question?
  - f) How should we mobilise the NGO sector to advance transformational, developmental, advocacy and support role than oppositionist and rejectionist posture that is even hostile?
  - g) What are the SACP's major ideological, organisational and structural weaknesses, shortcomings and impediments in building an agile, effective, dynamic, militant and strong organisation and how to overcome these?
  - h) Inversely, what are the SACP's major strengths and abilities? How to enhance and improve them to realise our strategic ideological political objectives?
  - i) What are possible implications of Party organisational review process to the Alliance in the next medium- to long-term? How can these be utilised to strengthen and reinforce Alliance whilst building working class power and hegemony in all sites and terrains of struggles?
  - j) How should we build the SACP as an independent, militant revolutionary working class Party of socialism able to build a strong profile and access to workers, both organised and unorganised? This would also mean aggressively accessing workers outside the main base of COSATU unions.<sup>596</sup>
  - k) What is the role of the YCL in organisational review process? How should we engage the youth, both through the YCL and independently, in all sites and terrains of struggle in our society including the socialtariat and the entire cybertariat, in the Blogs, Twitter, Facebook etc. to the ideas of socialism, community service and human solidarity and development?

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<sup>595</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2007b. The South African road to socialism: building working class hegemony, for a socialist orientated National Democratic Revolution. <http://www.sacp.org.za/main.php?include=docs/conf/2007/political.html> Dates of access: 23 Jan. 2012, 5 Jul. 2012, 5 Aug. 2012.

<sup>596</sup> Filatova, I. 2012. The lasting legacy: the Soviet theory of the National-Democratic Revolution and South Africa. *South African historical journal*, 64(3):507-537.

Equally related to this would be how to vitiate our different forms of Party building in line with our different communities and social strata and even interests?

- 1) In all of the above what kind of a cadre do we need to carry out these tasks, and what are creative forms and methods to build this cadre?<sup>597</sup>

## 6.16 Conclusion

It could be concluded that the tasks and requirement of building a militant and fighting SACP of socialism became a necessity to survive the ferocious attacks of the brutal capitalist system that was capturing even the modest of revolutionaries.<sup>598</sup> The SACP had to equip itself, calculate the risks correctly and develop appropriate interventions in order to advance the struggle for socialism or live forever under capitalist exploitation. If the SACP was unable to do this it would not avoid the peril of irrelevance and insignificance, particularly if it did not change the way it operated. This unavoidable consequence needed deep reflections and discussions. The SACP extolled its comrades to seriously debate the issues develop effective strategies, organisational and political solutions confronting the revolution.

The SACP developed a revolutionary programme of building working class hegemony in all key sites of power, SARS anchored on the strategic focus of the MTV. This programme also emphasised the necessity for the SACP to be in all sites and terrains of struggle, including spelling out some of the key terrains and fronts of struggle. In those key sites of struggle and power the SACP had to mobilize important sectors of society, such as the youth, women, the trade unions, etc.<sup>599</sup> Whilst the SACP had to be cautious that the organisational review exercise did not become an attempt to rewrite its programme, it nevertheless had to be based on a very concrete understanding of the challenges over the next 20 years or more. The SACP needed critical thinkers to lay a firm foundation of developing an enduring framework to build a formidable, determined, strong and united revolutionary working class Party in the SACP to lead the struggle for a socialist South Africa, a society free of all forms of exploitation!

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<sup>597</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2007a. 12th National Congress Resolutions: communists to the front to build a better socialist world.

<sup>598</sup> Ibid.

<sup>599</sup> SACP (South African Communist Party). 2009. Building working class hegemony on the terrain of the national democratic struggle. <http://www.sacp.org.za/main.php?ID=3107> Date of access: 4 Apr. 2012.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

This study intended to contribute to the literature on the backdrop of a limited past studies on the role of the SACP in the struggle for liberation in South Africa. It also sought to contribute to the academic synergy of key priorities and common focus areas of the South African Communist Party policies, interpretations and implementation requirements thereof from national to provincial and eventually to local government where it impacted on the lives of the people. The study has further contributed to reviewing and reorganizing the SACP with a view to playing a meaningful role in its future vanguard mission of a Socialist Democratic Revolution (SDR).

The structure of the SACP was based on the principles of democratic centralism. While demanding strict discipline, the subordination of a minority to the majority and of lower Party organs to higher organs, and the prohibition of all factions within the Party, it upheld the principle of democratic election of all leading organs of the Party, collective leadership and full debate of policy. The curtailment of some aspects of democratic procedure was inevitable under illegal conditions; this temporary situation had to be compensated for by all members, regarding it as their duty to participate in the formulation of policy and by the leadership, encouraging and making it possible for them to do so.

The Communist Party brought about profound changes in the thinking, political outlook, demands, forms of organisation and methods of struggle of the oppressed and exploited people of this country. The deep-rooted crisis in South Africa could not be resolved by the Nationalist government, using methods of force and violence or attempting to deceive home and world opinion with fraudulent schemes of "Bantu self-government" Nor could it be resolved by mere change of government to another section of the White ruling class which would make superficial concessions while leaving the essence of the colonial system and monopoly control intact. The crisis sprang from the fundamental contradictions of South African society: between the oppressed people and their rulers; between South African colonialism and the world-wide movement against colonialism and imperialism; between the working class and the rural masses, together with the middle classes, on the one side, and the handful of monopoly capitalists on the other.

This crisis could only be resolved by a revolutionary change in the social system which would overcome these conflicts by putting an end to the colonial oppression of the African and other non-White people. The immediate and imperative interests of all sections of the South African people demanded the carrying out of such a change, a national democratic revolution which would overthrow the colonialist state of White supremacy and establish an independent state of National Democracy in South Africa.

The allure of communist ideals in South Africa continued. The populist expectations created by the SACP and ANC during the struggle did not vanish. Neither party did anything to dispel them—on the contrary, each new ANC government came up with more unrealistic promises. In 2013 a new party, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), which called itself “a

revolutionary workers' party," emerged with familiar slogans: a National Democratic Revolution, the Freedom Charter, expropriation of land and nationalization of all mines, industries, and banks. In the 2014 elections, after just eight months of campaigning, the EFF won 6.35 percent of the vote and twenty-five parliamentary seats. Faced with such a dynamic rival on the left, it was probably too late for the SACP to go it alone in elections.

Populist rhetoric, including calls for radical economic transformation, came out of different corners of the ANC. For example, ANC branches throughout KwaZulu-Natal, the Minister of Mineral Resources and Zuma himself agitated for radical economic transformation and land expropriation without compensation. It could be concluded that the ANC showed signs of shifting more to the left of the economic spectrum. In 2017 the ANC member and Finance Minister, Malusi Gigaba, began to use the term 'inclusive growth' instead of radical economic transformation; released his 14-point programme which included partial privatisation of SOEs; and challenged the public protector's report which proposed changes to the Reserve Bank's mandate.

Although several radical land reform policy proposals were made, these policies, it could be argued, would not be implemented – rather, they were used as tools to attract voters who had become disillusioned with the ANC. Indefatigably, the ANC could be seen to have continued with its strategy of 'talk left, but walk right'. The ANC appeared and still demonstrate commitment to mixed model of redistributionist and neoliberal policies, which place it in the economic liberals camp. However, this could change if the Tripartite Alliance failed to unite behind one leader at the upcoming National Elective Conference in December 2017. The SACP and COSATU retained and still do so, their places at the far left of the economic spectrum known as the economic radicals' camp.

The SACP developed a revolutionary programme of building working class hegemony in all key sites of power, SARS anchored on the strategic focus of the MTV. This programme also emphasised the necessity for the SACP to be in all sites and terrains of struggle, including spelling out some of the key terrains and fronts of struggle. In those key sites of struggle and power the SACP had to mobilize important sectors of society, such as the youth, women, the trade unions, etc. Whilst the SACP had to be cautious that the organisational review exercise did not become an attempt to rewrite its programme, it nevertheless had to be based on a very concrete understanding of the challenges over the next 20 years or more. The SACP needed critical thinkers to lay a firm foundation of developing an enduring framework to build a formidable, determined, strong and united revolutionary working class Party in the SACP to lead the struggle for a socialist South Africa, a society free of all forms of exploitation!

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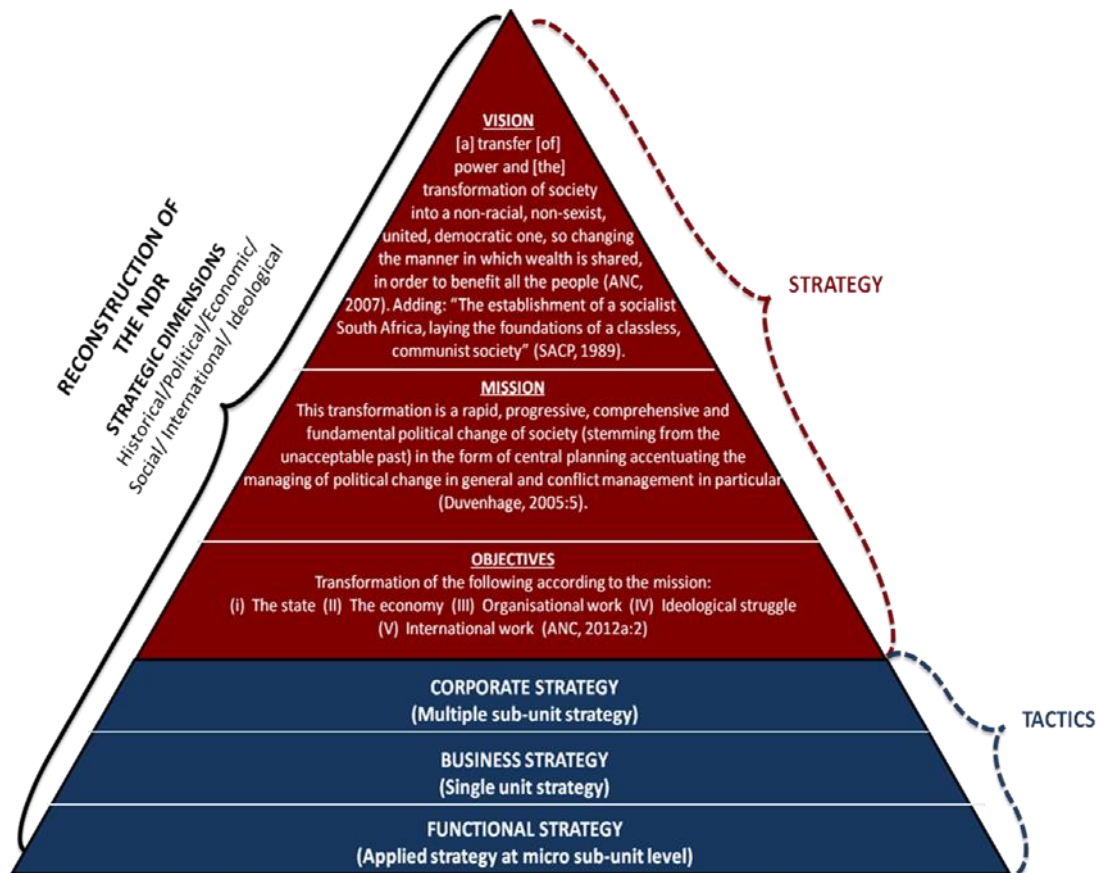
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APPENDIX 1

Hierarchy of the NDR Strategy



Byars, 1991:13; Schultz et al., 1987:37-39; Hill & Jones, 2009:30

**APPENDIX 2****INTERVIEW SHEET**

*(Academics and politicians comprising of SACP leadership, card-carrying members and academic historians and authorities in political science and international relations at universities.)* Interview initiated and completed at:

\_\_\_\_\_ Interviewee's

name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Interview Date:

\_\_\_\_\_

This interview is in respect of a study whose purpose is to give an exposition of The Role of the South African Communist Party (SACP) in the Struggle for Liberation in South Africa. The study is to be conducted by Sphamandla Siyabonga Gumede of the History Department, Faculty of Arts at the University of Zululand. Mr. Gumede is conducting this study towards a Doctoral Degree. Thus, responses to this interview will help in providing concrete information on the subject matter.

You are asked to complete this interview because you are a citizen /residence in the area of study (South Africa) or knowledgeable on issues under research. Your participation in this research interview is voluntary but of great importance to its success. Your decision about whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the researcher. Answering these questions will help you identify some tedious issues besides giving you the opportunity to state your opinions.

Please treat all the questions objectively and to the best of your knowledge and be rest assured that all the information you give will be confidential. Note, however, that there are no rights or wrong answers. The study is only interested in your opinions.

Before we begin do you have any questions?

**Section A:**

1. Province of Origin \_\_\_\_\_
2. Province of Residence \_\_\_\_\_
3. Area of Residence \_\_\_\_\_
4. Sex:      Male  Female
5. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What is your highest formal education attained?
  - a) Primary School
  - b) High School
  - c) Collage
  - d) University
  - e) Others specify \_\_\_\_\_
7. What is your present occupation?
  - a. Farming
  - b. Civil servant
  - c. Trading
  - d. Business men/women
  - e. Others Specify \_\_\_\_\_
8. What is your marital status?
  - a. Married
  - b. Single
  - c. Divorce
  - d. Widow

**Section B:**

1. What do you understand by 'National Democratic Revolution'?

Answer:

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2. What is the ideology of the SACP?

Answer:

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3. Is Marxism-Leninism as represented by the SACP still legitimate?

Answer:

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4. Why was/is the SACP central to the National Democratic Revolution and Transition to democracy in South Africa?

Answer:

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- 5. To what extent could the current international political economy allow the SACP to establish socialism in South Africa?

Answer:

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- 6. How could a review and re-organization of the SACP contribute to a socialist socio-economic dispensation in South Africa Answer:

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- 7. Do you think that if SACP can be elected to government it would create sustainable jobs in South Africa?

Answer:

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- 8. If SACP were to win elections, would education be free in South Africa and should the SACP contest elections alone?

Answer:

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- 9. Has the South African Communist Party remained faithful to its ideological doctrine and what are the factors responsible for ideological changes, if any?

Answer:

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10. Will the current International political economy allow a socialist SACP to lead government in South Africa and do you think SACP would retrench the workers if it can be in government?

Answer:

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Thank you

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Sphamandla Siyabonga Gumede

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Date:

## APPENDIX 3:

## Turnitin Report

Gumede

## ORIGINALITY REPORT

**09%**

SIMILARITY INDEX

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INTERNET SOURCES

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PUBLICATIONS

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## PRIMARY SOURCES

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## APPENDIX 4:

## Ethical Clearance Certificate

**UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND  
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**  
(Reg No: UZREC 171110-030)



**RESEARCH & INNOVATION**

Website: <http://www.unizulu.ac.za>  
Private Bag X1001  
KwaMlangeniwa 3886  
Tel: 035 902 6731  
Fax: 035 902 6222  
Email: DileanaM@unizulu.ac.za

## ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

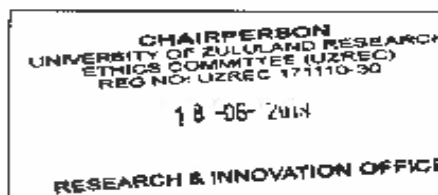
<b>Certificate Number</b>	UZREC 171110-030 PGD 2019/07			
<b>Project Title</b>	THE ROLE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY (SACP) IN THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION IN SOUTH AFRICA			
<b>Principal Researcher/ Investigator</b>	Sphamandla S. Gumede			
<b>Supervisor and Co-supervisor</b>	Dr M.Z Shamase			
<b>Department</b>	History			
<b>Faculty</b>	ARTA			
<b>Type of Risk</b>	Low Risk – Data collection from people			
<b>Nature of Project</b>	Honours/4 <sup>th</sup> Year	Master's	Doctoral	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Departmental

The University of Zululand's Research Ethics Committee (UZREC) hereby gives ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project. The Researcher may therefore commence with data collection as from the date of this Certificate, using the certificate number indicated above.

- Special conditions:**
- [1] This certificate is valid for 1 year from the date of issue.
  - [2] Principal researcher must provide an annual report to the UZREC in the prescribed format [due date-13 June 2020]
  - [3] Principal researcher must submit a report at the end of project in respect of ethical compliance.
  - [4] The UZREC must be informed immediately of any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the documents that were presented to the meeting.

The UZREC wishes the researcher well in conducting research.

  
Professor Gideon De Wet  
Chairperson: University Research Ethics Committee  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research & Innovation



14 June 2019