

AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS NATIONAL CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE JUNE 1985

E. MAJOR UNIT AND INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

E9: Ruling Class

THREE DOCUMENTS:

E9/VII ~ Extract from Proposals to the ANC/NCC

E9/I ~ On Negotiations; E9/IV ~ The Ruling Class

NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE ENEMY

Extract from Proposals to the ANC/NCC
(E9/VII (EU))

In view of Pretoria's kite-flying on the subject of possible negotiations with the ANC, this unit feels it ought to express itself on this subject as follows:

All wars, of whatever kind, end sooner or later with negotiations between the contending parties to them. Therefore we do not object *in principle* to negotiations as such. However, preparations for negotiations can be even more important than the negotiations themselves.

Conditions for such negotiations must be right. In present circumstances the ANC cannot enter into negotiations with Pretoria whilst Mandela is in prison and Tambo is in exile. Further, certain issues are negotiable, others are not so negotiable. Not negotiable is our inalienable right to every inch of our country; not negotiable is our right to self-determination; not negotiable is our right to life, to freedom, to independence, to economic and social progress; not negotiable is the absolute necessity for apartheid to be dismantled; not negotiable is the right of the majority to rule our country with or without constitutional guarantees for minorities.

These issues are not negotiable. What is negotiable are the legal, constitutional and administrative arrangements for the transfer of power in its totality – to be transferred smoothly from the minority to an ANC government, a people's government. This is negotiable, nothing else is negotiable. Is the time for such negotiations ripe? No, it is not ripe. There can be no meaningful negotiations with the enemy whilst he feels strong, impregnable, secure at home and firmly

supported in Washington, London, Paris, Brussels and Bonn, and whilst he feels that he can impose his own terms on the ANC.

Military and other forms of pressure must therefore be exerted on the enemy until he feels the pinch and sues for peace talks not out of choice but out of necessity.

When that happens the time will be ripe for the ANC to impose its own terms on the enemy's negotiations. In a word, time for serious negotiations will have arrived. That time is not yet.

All efforts to lure the ANC into premature negotiations must therefore be spurned.

On Negotiation – E9/I

It is the consensus of the branch that there can be no meaningful negotiations between the ANC and the Pretoria regime under the present circumstances. The branch bases its conclusion on the conditions set by the regime for such negotiations, namely:

- * Recognition by the ANC of the regime as a legitimate government of South Africa.
- * Disassociation from our allies by the ANC.
- * Abandonment of armed struggle.

The branch believes that meaningful and fruitful negotiations can only come about as a result of unbearable military and political pressure on the enemy by the ANC and all democratic forces in South Africa and internationally.

The branch believes that external pressure will be applied on the ANC to negotiate from a position of weakness. Therefore the ANC has to draw up detailed contingency plans for such an eventuality, which plans would include:

1. The laying down of conditions under which the ANC would enter negotiations:
 - a) Release of all political prisoners and detainees.
 - b) The lifting of the bans and the rescinding of banishment.
 - c) Lifting of the ban on the ANC and other political organisations.
 - d) Rescinding of all 'listings' and proscriptions on persons and publications.
 - e) The return, freedom of residence, movement and association and the guarantee of the safety of all persons in forced or voluntary exile.
 - f) The facilitation of political activity of the ANC (i.e. the right to organise and the right to mobilise) and provision to it of access to the state-controlled organs of mass communication.
 - g) Hostilities perpetrated against the Front Line States should cease.
 - h) The dissolution of the Bantustans and the rescinding of Influx Control.
2. The preparation of several tiers of delegations to undertake negotiations.
3. The detailed preparation of contingency plans to protect and safeguard the integrity and cadres of the ANC in case of expulsions, detentions or threats thereof from any heretofore friendly quarters.

PS: The conditions forwarded by the enemy/ regime are unacceptable and we have to reckon with the fact that we are, as a movement, still weak militarily.



THE RULING CLASS (E9/IV)

This is the final report of Group B. It deals with our definition of the enemy, changes in the character of the enemy in the period since the last conference, current enemy manoeuvres and tactics and the views of the group on how we should respond to these.

1. The Definition of the Enemy

The group felt that it was essential for Conference final documents and/or communiques to include a clear and concise definition of the enemy which moves beyond mere descriptive terms (white racists etc). Our people's daily experience of struggle was showing them that the enemy was a system and not white people per se. The role of capital, black oppressors and imperialism were becoming ever more apparent, and it was felt that it was important to build these perceptions into a definition of the enemy which also reflects the objective of our movement as being to seek a transformation of our society to eliminate all forms of exploitation and oppression. The group did not propose a definition as such, but favoured some formulation recognising apartheid as a form of capitalist exploitation based on national oppression.

2. Changes in the Character of the Enemy

The period since the last Consultative Conference has seen a number of important changes in the character of the enemy which it is essential to take into account. No attempt will be made to present a full analysis here, but the following are some of the elements which the group discussed and feels bear some reflection:

a) The monopolisation of the economy and the emergence of Afrikaner monopolies. The period has seen a process of rapid concentration and centralisation of capital. This has resulted in the emergence of a small number of very large conglomerates which today dominate South African capitalism. Recent studies speak of 11 power centres: the state, 3 banking groups (Barclays, Standard, Volkskas); and 7 conglomerates (Anglo American, Barlow Rand, Rembrandt, Sanlam, Liberty Life, SA Mutual and Anglovaal). These groups dominate the vast bulk of all production and exchange in our country. Moreover, they are highly interlinked with many cross shareholdings and common directors. Among them are a number of Afrikaner concerns – Rembrandt, Sanlam and Volkskas. The emergence of these Afrikaner monopolies is largely a result of state interven-

tion by the Nationalist regime. Before 1948 'Afrikaner business' consisted exclusively of small and medium sized concerns. Today Afrikaner monopoly capital constitutes a significant class force with more in common with its 'brother' non-Afrikaner monopoly capitalists than other classes in the original Afrikaner Nationalist alliance. These Afrikaner monopolies constitute one of the crucial forces behind the Botha regime.

b) The militarisation of the state. This refers not only to the quantitative expansion in the size of the SADF or the military budget (which has increased more than eleven-fold in the period 1969/70 to 1984/85 in terms of current prices). The military have also come to play an ever greater role in the formulation not only of military policy narrowly defined, but also of the 'total strategy' of the state. Through the State Security Council the military now has a direct role in determining policy at the very highest levels.

c) The upsurge of popular struggles. The last decade or so has seen a gradual development of our people's struggle at all levels – trade union action, the armed struggle, struggle through community and civic associations and other mass organisations. This upsurge has resulted in a shift in the balance of forces against the oppressors and exploiters and created a multiple crisis for the system.

d) The Botha regime and 'Total Strategy'. In the face of the above-described crisis a new alliance of forces was formed within the apartheid state – an alliance between the major monopolies and the top military commanders. The triumph of this alliance over other class forces in the Nationalist Party was reflected in the election of PW Botha as Premier in 1978. Botha personified this alliance having been both Minister of Defence and Leader of the Cape Nationalist Party (dominated from the outset by Sanlam).

The Botha regime attempted to respond to the crisis by launching a 'total strategy'. This envisaged the mobilisation of economic, political, psycho-social and military resources to defend the embattled system. The key objective at the domestic level was to produce black allies. This of itself was not new, but the regime realised that under existing conditions of struggle its collaborators in the Bantustans did not constitute a sufficient basis for it to stabilise the crisis-ridden apartheid system. To this end it offered certain limited concessions – aimed at so-called

'Coloureds', Asians and middle class Africans — which it styled reforms. In the region the regime launched its 'constellation of states' initiative aimed at creating through the offer of 'economic co-operation' to independent states a new ring of buffer states to replace its lost Portuguese colonialist and British settler allied states. It also developed and applied a range of destabilisation tactics against those states it saw as its adversaries.

3. The Current Position of the Enemy

The group considered it essential to recognise the present period as one in which the multiple crisis of the apartheid system has now also become a crisis of the 'total strategy'. The original package of measures through which the Botha regime intended to stabilise the system has now run its course but the system is more unstable than ever. Its constitutional plan has been shown to be manifestly unacceptable to the majority of our people; the local administrative structures set up as an integral part of the 'new constitutional dispensation' are now not only unacceptable but unworkable; uprisings in all parts of the country are now a regular occurrence; the economic crisis has deepened with 1985 certain to be the fourth year in a row of negative economic growth; foreign confidence in the economy has diminished while the disinvestment campaign has reached new levels; Nkomati fever did not spread and the regime currently confronts a greater level of coherence and opposition to its manoeuvres on the part of regional states than at any time in the past year.

In these circumstances the regime is showing increasing signs that it has lost its way and has no clear idea how to govern the country. Having itself realised that the ruling class could not maintain its rule in the old way, it now confronts a situation in which its attempts to create the means of asserting its rule in new ways have failed. The regime itself shows signs of uncertainty, vacillating between vague promises of 'more substantial reforms' and heavy jack-booted crack downs in the tradition of Sharpeville, Soweto and now Langa. It appears that these vacillations reflect divisions within the cabinet itself. Certainly there are signs that important forces within monopoly capital are unhappy at the way things are developing — both about the regime's failure to stabilise the situation and about its management of economic policies. Something of a crisis of representation for monopoly capital is developing.

Such developments are, of course, very positive from our point of view, but they also raise the prospect of new enemy manoeuvres and tactics which will necessitate some response from us. In particular there is a current within ruling class circles and even the regime itself which appears to favour a more concerted effort to win black allies. This tendency appears to believe that what was wrong with the package to date was not so much the content as such, but the fact that it was imposed from above rather than 'negotiated' with 'representative blacks'. New offers are now being made to entice such figures into a process of pseudo-negotiation where the one certain element is that discussion of a society based on equal political rights for all within a unitary state is off the agenda.

The group felt that particular attention should be paid to Buthelezi and Inkatha. The regime has not yet really played the 'Buthelezi card' and while the group felt confident that a deal with Gatsha would not succeed in stabilising the system, it nevertheless considered that more political work should be done to expose Buthelezi and win over rank and file Inkatha members. This is more urgent as Buthelezi has, over the past year, made a concerted effort to project Inkatha as the authentic heir to the traditions of the original ANC which were allegedly 'distorted' when what is now the External Mission opted for armed struggle.

More significantly, there is clearly an attempt underway to divide our movement and the UDF by making various proposals for 'dialogue' or 'negotiation'. The more far-seeing elements in the ruling class are coming to the conclusion that they have no chance of stabilising the system unless they 'attract' certain forces currently represented within our movement and/or democratic popular organisations. The group's evaluation of such enemy manoeuvres and its view of what our response should be is summarised below.

ENEMY MANOEUVRE

1. Put out feelers for talks

2. Release political prisoners on condition that they give an undertaking not to engage in violence.

3. Legalise the ANC without dropping the Internal Security Act or allowing exiles to return.

ENEMY OBJECTIVE

Divide the ANC. Disrupt the Conference by making this the dominant issue. Win support and/or endorsement for its proposals on local administration from individuals or forces within the ANC.

Divide the ANC. Try to isolate those supporting the armed struggle.

Divide the ANC. Undercut the 'moral case' for armed struggle. Get internal cadres to expose themselves.

OUR RESPONSE

The group agreed with the positions enunciated by the NEC and Comrade President.

Demand the unconditional release of all political prisoners. Applaud positions like those of Comrade Mandela. Declare that any individuals who accept the terms do not speak for the ANC, but do not over-react to such individuals. Act to recuperate and/or reintegrate them as in the case of Comrade Denis Goldberg.

A tactic which the enemy does not show signs of applying in the immediate future, but one which is being floated in certain circles and which might pose one of the most serious medium-term challenges to our movement. If this were to happen, we should denounce the enemy's objective and refuse his (explicit or implicit) terms, but hail the fact that he has been compelled to take such a step as a victory. Under such circumstances we would have to assert a legal or semi-legal presence through resurrecting open organisational structures in the country. The challenge will be to do this in a way which does not expose underground cadres and does not split broad front organisations like the UDF. The group felt that Conference should alert the Political Department to prepare for such an eventuality.

In general the group felt that it was necessary to prepare for possible major changes in our situation within a relatively short space of time. Before the next Conference we may find ourselves in a situation in which the enemy is willing to accept some or all of our preconditions for talks. We need to be clear on the terms and tactics in any such negotiations, and to prepare our membership to see possible negotiations under such conditions as a complementary form of struggle. Then there may be a relatively long period in which we are able to operate legally or semi-legally, but are not in power. What we do in such an eventuality may be crucial, and for this reason it is necessary to give priority to internal political work. It may not even be premature for the Research and Educational Departments to begin to think about the problems of preparing for a liberated South Africa.

Finally, the group considered that the time may be ripe to make an appeal to a wider group of whites than the small minority actively engaged in the struggle or supportive of us. The objective of such an appeal would be to neutralise these, win them over or at least prevent them from becoming saboteurs and active counter-revolutionaries. Such an appeal could stress that the regime has lost control, that apartheid is doomed and can only offer a future of continued violence, instability and crisis. The ANC offers the only alternative to this. Any such appeal, however, should be firmly located within our basic policies.

