

# African National Congress

NATIONAL PREPARATORY COMMITTEE  
of the  
NATIONAL CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE

## BROAD GUIDELINES FOR DISCUSSION

### Part I

1. It is now 25 years since the ANC held its last legal National Conference within our country. The intention of the enemy in banning our movement was to prevent the transfer of power that we seek to bring about through a coming national consultative conference. The situation which favours the rapid advancement of the goal of liberation. Our movement can contribute to this goal as has contributed decisively to the liberation of the ANC is now called upon to chart the path to victory at a point where we can mount a decisive assault on the power from the hands of the racist and fascist white minority regime. It will be the task of our conference to chart this path to victory.

Documents  
collected before  
the Kabwe 4  
Kabwe  
Conference

2. The last 25 years have also seen the virtual total collapse of the colonial system, a process which has brought the frontiers of freedom to the very borders of our country. During this period, the conflict between the forces of national liberation, democracy, socialism and peace on the one hand and those of imperialist reaction and

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war, on the other, continued to sharpen. This struggle has resulted in a continuous shift in the balance of forces, internationally, in favour of the world anti-imperialist movement. Imperialism continues to suffer from deep economic crisis, and it has to contend with the mounting struggles of the working people and other democratic forces for peace and social progress. Faced with this general crisis, world imperialism has launched a new counter-offensive aimed at regaining lost ground. In this endeavour, the forces of reaction know no limit, and their capacity to launch and sustain a counter-offensive is not exhausted. The last 25 years have seen the greatest increase in the stockpiles of nuclear weapons and the sharpening of the threat of a nuclear holocaust, thanks to the policy of brinkmanship pursued by the imperialist countries. At the same time, the spectre of counter-revolution continues to stalk the world. Countries falling within the world sector dominated by imperialism have continued to fall prey to the twin scourges of worsening economic deprivation and political reaction.

This period has however also confirmed that the only choice available to the peoples is to break out of the grip of imperialist tyranny and to establish a social and economic order which seeks to promote the interests of the ordinary working people. Imperialism has demonstrated in practice that it is unable to satisfy the



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material and spiritual needs of the people and the progressive transformations that have taken place in many parts of the world during this period, confirm the bankruptcy of imperialism and neo-colonialism and demonstrate the resolve of the peoples to change their lives for the better, despite the most fierce resistance by the forces of reaction. Our own struggle is taking place in this international context and itself adds to the offensive of the forces of progress and is supported and strengthened by these forces. Our discussions will therefore have to take these international factors into account, especially since the region of southern Africa has emerged in the last 25 years as one which imperialism considers an important zone in its global strategy, an area that must be preserved within its fold at all costs.

3. Over the last 25 years, South Africa has slid into a chronic crisis affecting the entire structure of the racist colonial economy. This was, and is accompanied by a general decline in the living standards of the black people. On the other hand, the wealth of our country has been and continues to be, concentrated into fewer and fewer hands, and today, it is controlled by a handful of local and foreign giant corporations. At the same time, the Afrikaner exploiters have effectively used their political position to carve for themselves an important position in the ownership of this wealth.



Their position in the economy as part of the capitalist class has led to an increasing convergence of views among all sections of the monopolists on how best to defend the status quo and perpetuate the oppression and super-exploitation of the black majority.

However, in this period we have also witnessed divisions within the ruling class, and conflicts among the rulers continue to surface. Within Afrikanerdom, differences culminated in the 1982 split within the Nationalist Party; and some landowners, small farmers and workers who belong to the emergent movement oppose any tampering with the apartheid system, however cosmetic it might be. These forces openly propound fascist slogans and, although they are hysterical in their attacks against the Botha clique, they form part of the entire Afrikaner oppressor group. The processes taking place within the ruling class are a result, first and foremost, of the intensification of the struggle by the oppressed majority led by the liberation movement. On the other hand, some sections of big business demand long-term policies which, in their thinking, will diffuse the political and economic crises afflicting the country. It should be emphasised that all these sections of the expliciter classes agree on the fundamental question of maintaining the colonial status of the black majority. The conference will have to answer the question, how to exploit as well as deepen contradictions within the enemy. Faced



with the deepening general crisis of the apartheid system - as shown by the structural crisis of the economy and the popular offensive for people's power - the racist rulers now and then adopt "new" methods of rule in order to defend the status quo. The past 25 years have seen the emergence of the bantustan system and its intensification to the point where a few among these rural backwaters have been declared "independent". Millions of African people have formally been deprived of their citizenship; forced removals and other evils of the bantustan system have been intensified. In these areas, the policies pursued by the regime amount to nothing less than genocide. The racist regime relies, for the implementation of this strategy, on a few propertied individuals from among the African people. Dependent for this self-advancement on handouts from their masters, these traitors have not come second in their ruthlessness against the people.

The latest designs to manage the ever-deepening crisis, the so-called total strategy constitute an intensification of all the evils of apartheid, and a modification of its minor aspects to give the racist colonial system a semblance of respectability. Central in the new drive, is an even greater militarisation of the country - the acquisition of larger stocks of modern armaments including nuclear weapons, longer terms of service and now conscription of white immigrants and "Coloured" and Indian youth, the involvement of all whites



in the so-called Area Defence System. Militarism has also meant the intensification of the aggressive drive to dominate the sub-continent. Total strategy has also meant the concentration of all power in the hands of the Botha/Malan clique. The new constitution which puts dictatorial powers in the hands of an executive president constitutes a culmination of the process whereby the military upper crust and a few chosen individuals will run the country and supervise the operation of the streamlined and centralised governmental structures. The enemy strategy also aims at driving a wedge between the "Coloured" and Indian people on the one hand, and the Africans on the other. By offering the former token representation in the dummy parliaments, the regime seeks to win them over to its side. However, as the outcome of the "elections" showed, this attempt has met with dismal failure.

In addressing ourselves to this question, Conference will have to chart the way forward to ensure that this historic victory becomes a stepping stone to the goal of rendering this new structure and all institutions of Apartheid unworkable. Similarly, we will have to consider the question of the local administrative structures such as the urban councils, as well as the attempts of the enemy to divide the rural and urban sections of the African people into hostile camps by offering the latter petty sops. The unity shown in the struggle against the Koornhof Bills and against forced removals and evictions

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is a manifestation of the potential in the direction of cementing the unity in action of the workers and landless peasantry. This unity should be worked for among all black and democratic forces, especially at this period when the regime has intensified its programme to win over what it terms "the black middle class" into defenders of the colonial system. Although none among the black people is being raised above his/her colonial status, the danger of introduction of reformist illusions among sections of our people remains. We must pay constant attention to this development, expose and challenge these machinations from all directions. The need to cement the unity of the broad democratic movement, and to broaden as well as deepen its base is made the more imperative by the urgent task we face of defeating the enemy's new offensive.

To achieve the purpose of dividing and thus rendering the democratic movement ineffective, the forces of reaction also rely on a number of political and ideological positions which seek to take advantage of the immaturity of certain sections of our population. These positions have included anti-communism, extreme nationalism, racism, tribalism and ultra-leftism. It is also clear that the enemy will carry out various measures to seek to drive a wedge between the democratic movement at home and the section of our movement outside the country.



4. No revolution can take place if there is no revolutionary organisation to organise, educate and lead the masses in the struggle for the capture of power. The historic mission of the ANC is to lead the masses of our people in the struggle for the victory of the national democratic revolution. It will therefore be one of the principal tasks of our conference to discuss our state of organisation with a view to proposing such changes as would help further to strengthen the ANC and make it an even more effective vanguard organisation of our national liberation movement. The ANC has been illegal within our country for 24 years now. During this period, the enemy has used various means and methods to suppress our vanguard organisation. These have included the hanging, assassination, torture, imprisonment, detention, banning and banishment of ANC leaders and cadres. The enemy has gone further to wage a political and ideological struggle against the ANC aimed at fomenting divisions within our ranks and isolating us from the masses of our people. This campaign has extended to the rest of the world, with the Pretoria regime seeking to get the ANC uprooted from the independent States of Southern Africa and from other countries where it maintains diplomatic missions. At other times, the enemy has used various means in an attempt to discredit our organisation as a whole or specific individual members of the ANC. Practice has proved that, for the enemy, no manoeuvre is too intricate, no lie too big, no fabrication too base and no crime too horrendous in its efforts to destroy our movement.



As we prepare for our conference, the reality we find is that the ANC enjoys massive popularity among the masses of our people who have, as our leadership has pointed out in the past, virtually lifted the ban on our movement. The ANC owes this resilience to the fact that its policy accords with the fundamental aspirations of our people; its strategy and tactics have kept pace with the yearning of the masses for liberation; its practical activities have helped further to unleash the revolutionary energies of the people and to give direction to the revolutionary anger of the masses. Our very successes however impose an obligation on us to march forward, together with these risen masses, with bold steps towards victory. For this, we need a strong and dynamic ANC that can and must respond to the demands of the revolution. To fashion such an ANC, we have to bridge the gap which exists between the widespread popularity of our movement and its actual organised strength within the country. The ANC is faced with the challenge of taking full advantage of the popularity of our organisation among the masses to develop an extensive underground machinery capable of reaching the majority of our people in all parts of the country. This is a question which requires to be dealt with urgently. When we were observing the 79th anniversary of our movement, the NEC pointed out that over the years the ANC had developed from an African organisation to one that represents all revolutionary and democratic forces of our country, of all nationalities.



At the Morogoro Consultative Conference of 1969, it was decided that we should open membership of the ANC externally to all South African revolutionaries without regard to nationality. Our forthcoming Conference will be called upon to decide whether we should go beyond this position and formally open membership at home as well, and whether we should remove the restriction that only African comrades can be members of the NEC.

As we have already observed, over the last 25 years the apartheid regime has pushed ahead with its Bantustan programme. Among others, this has had the three effects of increasing the proportion of the African people in the countryside, turning this countryside into an area in which the masses have truly nothing to lose but their chains and encouraging the re-birth of narrow ethnic consciousness and loyalties. The advance of our revolution requires that we pay ever greater attention to the rural masses, to raise our organised strength among these masses in order to increase our capacity to draw them into the revolutionary struggle in their millions.

In the document "Strategy and Tactics" adopted at the Morogoro Conference of 1969, we pointed out that the working class constitutes the leading social force in the struggle for the victory of the national democratic revolution. Therefore it goes without saying that our increased attention to the countryside does not in any sense mean that



we should relax our efforts to draw the workers into the ranks of the ANC and to educate them to play their vanguard role.

The struggle for a democratic and non-racial system of education in South Africa, especially from 1976 to date, has drawn a whole generation of the youth into the struggle for the transfer of power to the people. Naturally, this has reflected itself in a sharp increase in the proportion of young people in the membership of our organisation. In our structures externally, we have the Youth and Student Section which is an important formation within our movement charged, among other things, with the task of educating and training our youth to play their role as the rightful inheritors of the tradition of revolutionary struggle handed down to us by previous generations. Yet no similar formation exists inside the country charged with this task, since the Youth League was dissolved by decisions of our movement when we had to go underground. Our Conference will have to discuss the question whether we should extend the Youth Section to within our country. Similarly we will have to consider the correctness or otherwise of proceeding in the same way with regard to the Women's Section.

At the time it was banned, the ANC decided to establish an External Mission to mobilise international political and material resources to reinforce the internal struggle. Owing to the successes



of the enemy against our movement during the period of extreme reaction, our External Mission assumed the functions of our internal structures. The successes we have scored in reconstructing our movement inside the country have created the possibility for us to review this situation. The Conference will have to look into this question. Despite this, it remains a fact of our situation that the External Mission must continue to play a vital role in the development of the struggle inside our country. Our Conference will therefore have to discuss what measures we have to adopt to improve the quality of our membership outside our country. Up to now, we have not succeeded to develop and implement a consistent cadre policy designed to build the kind of cadre that our struggle demands. The Conference will have to pay attention to this question. Equally important is the issue of political life within our organisation externally. All members of the ANC should ideally belong to basic units of RPC's including those of the Women's And Youth Sections. It is through these units and the related senior structures of the movement of the ANC, among other things, that the membership is able to participate in the formulation of policy. These units should also act as a control mechanism to ensure that we also discharge our obligations to the movement and the struggle in general. The Conference will therefore have to discuss the functioning of these structures, especially with regard to the question of whether they are adequate to ensure the active political



involvement of all members as well as sufficient and timely communication between the leadership and the membership. In this context, it will be necessary for the Conference to discuss the question whether or not there is any need, at this stage, to adopt a document defining constitutional guidelines which would stipulate the manner in which the organisation should operate. The Conference will also have to discuss the issue of political life within the People's Army, Umkhonto We Sizwe, and seek to agree on the role of the political organs of the ANC within MK. These are some of the major questions that we will have to discuss under the item, state of organisation, with the clear aim of reaching a consensus on ways and means of improving our organisational effectiveness to ensure that we are properly geared to carry out our historic mission of leading the democratic movement of our country to victory over the forces of colonialism, racism and fascism.

5. The development of the mass democratic struggle is yet another important element in our strategy. In this area, we have made many important strides forward. Millions of our people have participated and are participating in active struggle against the apartheid regime both around local and national issues. These struggles have drawn in all nationalities, classes and strata. Increasingly, thanks to the correct positions espoused in the Freedom Charter, this mass democratic movement is adopting the same political positions and, on this basis,



is further extending its organisational unity, and hence its capacity to act together as one united force. However, even in this area, many questions still remain to be attended to. Millions of our people remain outside the mass democratic formations. These include all sections of our people. The level of mass organisation in the countryside, in both the commercial farms and the Bantustans remain low. Correspondingly, in these areas, we have not succeeded to develop active mass resistance to apartheid oppression and exploitation. This is a task which needs to be tackled with greater vigour and urgency. In this context, we should point out that we have also not properly utilised our possibilities of working within reactionary organisations and enemy institutions in order to gain access to the masses who might be influenced by such groupings and to neutralise and transform these groupings in favour of the revolution. The motto is to be wherever the people are.

The majority of the working class of our country also continues to be outside the democratic movement. The ANC has the organisational capacity to make even greater strides in the struggle to ensure that these unorganised workers are brought into the trade union movement. We are observing 1984 as our year of the women. This is in recognition of the fact that the women of our country, who constitute more than 50 per cent of our people have a pivotal role to play in the struggle for liberation. Therefore our aim is once more to



organise the unorganised sections among our womenfolk and to mobilise the women into active struggle. It's however true that much work still remains to be done in this regard. It is also true that we have as yet and as a movement, not yet paid consistent and comprehensive attention to the question of the liberation of women within the context of the struggle for national and social emancipation. We need to attend to this question, both with regard to its theory and in the practical conduct of the struggle. Similarly, large numbers of young people remain outside the organised structures of the democratic movement. This is a weakness which needs to be corrected to ensure that the youth, who have already demonstrated their revolutionary potential and fearlessness, are involved in their entirety in the struggle. As the crisis of the apartheid system persists and deepens, divisions among the white oppressor population also assume permanency. This gives greater possibilities for the national liberation movement to win over to its side ever greater numbers of our white compatriots. This raises the question, among others, whether there is need to establish special formations to cater for such democratic-minded whites of the COD-type, or whether they should be drawn into existing non-racial democratic structures. As a revolutionary movement, we are interested that the mass democratic movement should assume an orientation which focuses the central task of the destruction of the apartheid regime and the transfer of power to the people.



In our mass work we therefore have the responsibility to inject and promote the politics of revolutionary change which the January 8th, 1984 NEC statement spoke of. This is of utmost importance as no revolutionary transfer of power can take place if the masses of our people do not act as a conscious revolutionary force with clear and correct strategic and tactical objectives. Consequently, we need to address the question - what should these objectives be? In this regard, we also need to have a clear perspective and a programme of work directed at translating the fundamental thesis of the working class as the vanguard force in the national democratic revolution into reality.

The last 25 years have demonstrated that the enemy is unable to stop the process of the emergence and growth of mass democratic organisations. All the enemy measures, whether of repression or deceitful political manoeuvre only have the effect, in the long run, of inspiring the people further into struggle. The principal task of our people is to expand the democratic movement in our country to activate this movement further into struggle and to develop it into a mass political army of revolution. Our conference is charged with the task of assisting to draw the guidelines pointing the way forward towards the accomplishment of these objectives.

6. The permanence and decisive importance of the strategy of armed struggle to the liberation process is accepted by the masses of our



people. Every blow that Umkhonto We Sizwe strikes at the enemy is received by our people with revolutionary acclaim. Over the years, the people's army has carried out many operations as a form of armed propaganda. These have achieved the aims of further reinforcing the mass popular upsurge, popularising armed struggle and demonstrating in practice that we are capable of penetrating the enemy's wall of security and defeating a reactionary force which had sought to present itself as invincible. Clearly, we still need to continue with these acts of armed propaganda as part of our general offensive. Our principal task in the military sphere however are to expand our organised military strength within the country and to develop our armed actions into a continuous, nation-wide and escalating offensive. To achieve these objectives requires that our armed units should be based among the masses of our people, relying on them for protection and sustenance, and, at the same time, drawing greater and greater numbers of our people into combat.

Accordingly, we should treat the cadres we have and will have outside our country as the core of the people's army that we are building. This means that these cadres should, in the main receive all-round political, military and organisational training which would enable them to act as the control centre of the multi-million army that we have to train and engage in action in order to be victorious. Therefore we are talking of an army core that has a very



high level of political development, that is, in the first instance, composed of political cadres of the ANC, and that sees itself as a political representative of the people first and second, as a specialised group of women and men, trained to carry and use weapons of war. The Conference will therefore have to address itself to this question.

Our strategy in its totality as well as the practical questions we have to solve in the conduct of the struggle also raise many questions about the social composition of the core of the people's army that we have been talking about. Our reality is that, in the main, this core is composed of young people, most of whom were students when they volunteered to join the ranks of the MK. On them has fallen the task of prosecuting the armed struggle and bringing it to the commendable level where it is today. Yet we can see from our own experience that the quality of the people's army has suffered from the relative absence from its ranks of the workers and the peasants. Our own perspective with regard to the role of these social classes in the revolutionary struggle demands that we correct this imbalance. Conference will have to address itself to the question of what steps we have to take to solve this problem. It is also true that within the ranks of this leading core of MK there is an imbalance with regard to the presence of the various national groups that



constitute the population of our country. In part, this situation points to the depth of the problems we have to solve with regard to the national question in our country. Our perspective of the development of the armed struggle visualises a situation when we shall be able not only to challenge and defeat the fascist army in our country, but also be able to defend the victorious revolution against both external and internal forces of counter-revolution. This implies that we should prepare the cadres who can, in fact, act as well qualified and competent specialists even in the field of regular warfare to ensure that our state of preparedness takes into account all contingencies, while being based on the practical demands of our revolution. We are called upon to confront and defeat the most advanced army on the African continent. This is a task that we will achieve. Our conference has to help provide the ideas which can contribute to transform this objective into reality.

7. During the last 25 years, the ANC led our people through bitter struggles against the colonial racist regime. Despite all manoeuvres by the enemy to strike fatal blows against this organisation and our struggle, our movement for national liberation has remained united around the policy, strategy and tactics of the ANC. In the coming period it will be necessary that we continue to pay attention to the task of ensuring maximum unity of the oppressed people and all democratic forces.



The challenge facing us, individually and as a collective is to raise higher the striking capacity of our organisation, to enable it to play its central role in the struggle for the seizure of power by our people.

The process of increasing the striking capacity of our movement, would demand that we strengthen all our units from the lowest to the highest echelons.

Active participation in the preparations for the coming National Consultative Conference constitutes one of the efforts in strengthening the ANC. It is a task we must and shall achieve.

FORWARD TO THE NATIONAL CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE!

FORWARD TO PEOPLE'S POWER!