

Together, let's defeat capitalist greed and corruption!

Together, build socialism now!

Political Report of the Central Committee to the Special National Congress

10 December 2009

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1. Introduction

We are gathered in Polokwane as some 1000 delegates representing 96,049 SACP members from throughout South Africa. In the 88 year history of communist activism in South Africa, this is the largest ever membership of the Communist Party. Our membership has been growing by leaps and bounds over the last few years of this year. We attribute this growth to the SACP's active campaigning in communities around the issues that affect the great majority of our people. The profile of our membership is relatively young, nearly 40% of our members are now women, and a majority of our members are drawn from the ranks of the millions of unemployed and marginalised.

Why have we gathered together in this Special National Congress? We are here, in part, because we have resolved that the SACP should meet, mid-term, at least once in a non-elective national congress between our regular five-yearly national congresses. But this Special National Congress is not just a matter of routine. It has not simply been convened by a calendar.

Its timing and its objectives are, above all, related to the aspirations, the frustrations and the struggles of millions and millions of South Africans – workers, rural and urban poor, marginalized middle classes, struggling petty entrepreneurs, teachers, health-care workers, social workers, professionals whose careers are stunted and whose professional values are constantly under threat of being perverted by an all-encompassing and greedy capitalist market.

This Special Congress is about the landless and land hungry poor. It is about those living in appalling conditions in shacks or in shoddily built "RDP" houses. It is about casualised workers, it is about today's modern chattel slaves, those enchained to heartless labour brokers. It is about thousands of women and children who suffer from domestic violence - the symptom of a society in distress. It is about learners struggling to acquire an education often in the most appalling conditions. It is about students battling to pay fees. It is about the 2,8 million young South Africans between the ages of 18 and 24 years who are neither in an educational institution, nor in employment or training.

Today, we are saying to all of you – Stand Up! Let us not suffer in silence! Together, let us organise and mobilize to roll back the heartless domination of a capitalist system!

This Special Congress is about the millions of South Africans infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. It is about the tens of thousands of heroic care-givers, family members,

health-care workers and child-headed households. It is about millions of South Africans stranded in distant townships and rural areas, in spaces that continue to replicate apartheid exclusion and marginalisation. It is about the 10 million who daily depend on under-resourced and overcrowded public transport to travel long distances to work.

This Congress is about tens of thousands of defence force personnel who have been neglected, sometimes mistreated in a so-called integration process that has failed to seriously transform our armed forces into a motivated, patriotic cadre upholding the democratic values of our new society. It is about warders and policemen and women, who are bearing the brunt of a serious and often violent crime problem – another indicator of grave social distress in our society.

This Congress is about the threat that corruption poses for the deepening and advancing our democratic gains. It is about continuation of our 2009 Red October Campaign to mobilize every worker, community member and all South African citizens to fight the scourge of corruption, wherever it occurs, whether in the public or private sector. Corruption is tantamount to theft from the poor, and must be relentlessly exposed as it is a cancer that may slowly bleed our democracy to death. Let our people refuse to keep silent, irrespective of who is involved in corruption. Let us root out corruption in business, in the public sector, in our communities and in all of society.

This Congress is about the plight of our region and of the whole of sub-Saharan Africa. It is about building solidarity with the millions of economic refugees living in our midst. It is about the global struggle against imperialism and the capitalist greed-driven destruction of our rivers, our forests, our oceans, the pollution of the places where we live and where we work, and of the air that we breathe.

This Congress also addresses itself to elected political representatives and the senior management cadre in all spheres of the state. We know that many are constantly torn between the values of public service, of building a developmental state, of participatory democracy, on the one hand – and the temptations of power and capitalist incitement to greed and corruption, on the other.

This Congress addresses itself to the black majority of our country. It was the Communist Party in SA in 1929 that first pioneered the call for a collective struggle for black empowerment as the core democratic task in our society. Together, led by the ANC and its broad movement, let us ensure that the noble task of black emancipation is not captured by a faction of parasites who use and abuse their political connections for their own private accumulation. Let us defeat javelin-throwers and 'tenderpreneurs'. Let us defeat frontiers, go-betweens, compradors who parade their blackness only in order

to advance their own private interests by doing the bidding of their masters – well-entrenched monopoly capital.

This Congress addresses itself to the women of our country, who constitutes the majority of the South African population. To you as South African women we say, organize and defeat sexism and patriarchy. To working class women in particular we say organize to defeat your subjection to the most exploitative of jobs. But this is also a call to men, to say that sexism, patriarchy and subjection of women to violence cannot be defeated unless you all join in this struggle. Let working class women and men be at the forefront of all the struggles for women's emancipation!

This Congress addresses itself to all South Africans, black and white. The SACP is proud to have been the pioneer of non-racialism in our country, not just in theory, but in the actual trenches of struggle. The SACP proudly upholds the values of internationalism. A people that oppresses another, can never itself be free. Together, let us defeat all forms of racism, narrow tribalism, and ethnic chauvinism – whether white or black.

This Congress even addresses itself, yes, to those in business. We know that many of you realize the trajectory on which our world and our country are currently embarked is simply unsustainable. We know that, many of you, deep down in your hearts, realize that the pace of climate change poses a grave danger for the whole of humanity, regardless of class. We know that at least some of you appreciate that the persisting levels of poverty, racialised inequality, and crisis-levels of unemployment in our society cannot be sustained forever. They cry out for radical solutions. Together, let us discuss what these solutions might be.

But above all, this Congress addresses itself to the workers and poor of our country. You are the key motive force for change. It is you who must be the principal agents of transformation. Together, let us organize and mobilize around your aspirations, your frustrations, your collective strength. Together, let us build working class hegemony in all sites of power! As workers and poor of our country, properly organized, you have what it takes to tackle any task in front of you, as you did in your class leadership in your heroic struggle to defeat the apartheid regime!

Socialism has to be the future...or there will be no future. Together, let us begin to build capacity for and momentum towards a society increasingly based on meeting social needs, not private profits. Let us build the beginnings of socialism, right now!

2. The three major tasks of our Special Congress

This Special Congress has **three** major tasks:

1.1 We need to develop an understanding of the current global capitalist economic crisis. It is a crisis that is very far from being over. Playing our vanguard role, collectively, we need to help our movement, our government and the people of South Africa understand the underlying structural features of this worst capitalist crisis since the 1930s. Even in the recent so-called "good times" of capitalist boom, a billion people around the world went to bed hungry, a billion lived in slums. Now, with the crisis, conditions have worsened for workers and the poor. Global capitalism has no solutions to its crisis other than the crisis itself! Various bail-outs and stimulus packages are simply delaying the advent of worse crises, while shifting the burden of indebtedness on to future generations. So what are the programmatic responses that we must develop as South Africans? And as humanity? How do we defend the working class and the poor, and how do we go beyond defence? How do we turn a crisis within capitalism, into a crisis OF capitalism? How do we transform the world economy from one dominated by speculative profits for a few, into a world based on meeting the social needs of all? How do we begin to roll back the empire of the capitalist market? Beginning to answer these questions is our first major task at this Congress.

1.2 Our second major task is related to the first. We need to help our movement and our country understand a major paradox, a cruel irony. Why, after more than 15 years of democracy, after 15 years of many earnest efforts, after 15 years of some real advances...why do we still live in a society in which the legacy of apartheid appears to be constantly reproduced and even expanded? In 1994 unemployment in SA was at crisis-levels of around 24%. So why, 14 years later towards the middle of last year, after what was heralded as a decade and more of "unprecedented" growth, and BEFORE the current recession began to hit our economy...why had we only managed to bring unemployment finally down to roughly the SAME figure of 24%? In 1994 our RDP document estimated that we had a housing shortage of 3 million. Over the past 15 years the state has built 3.1 million low-cost houses for the poor. So why is the housing shortage STILL almost the same as it was back in 1994? Why do we seem to be going around in a circle? Why is our GINI-coefficient, measuring income inequality, still stubbornly amongst the very highest recorded in the world? And why does inequality remain so dramatically racialised in our country? This Congress must pose these awkward questions. This Congress must not just analyse these realities – it must come up with concrete programmes of state intervention and popular mobilization. In particular, as our mid-November Alliance Summit underlined, the challenge is to radically change our current growth path. It is the

particular character of SA's century-long capitalist growth path that continues to reproduce racialised inequality, serious structural unemployment, systemic under-development and our persisting semi-colonial position with the global economy.

1.3 Our third challenge is to make sense of the relatively turbulent past two-and-a-half years in the history of our ANC-led movement. And we will not be able to make sense of this turbulence unless we understand the linkages between this turbulence and the global economic crisis, and our local reproduction of racialised under-development and inequality, notwithstanding 15 years of democracy.

The SACP discussion document distributed and debated by our structures ahead of this Congress ("Building Working Class Hegemony on the Terrain of a National Democratic Struggle") has laid the basis for discussion in our commissions and for Congress resolutions – particularly in regard to the first two major challenges.

In what follows in this CC Political Report to Congress, we will be turning more substantially to the third of our major challenges – how do we analyse our intra-movement challenges? How do we assess progress made by the SACP? What are our tasks going forward on the terrain of our movement?

In addressing these matters, we will need to map a way forward towards our 13th Congress in 2012 and beyond

3. Developments since our 12th Congress

Since our 12th Congress in Port Elizabeth one of the most significant developments has been the dislodging of the 1996 class project in the ANC, and significantly rolling back its influence not only in the ANC, but in the Alliance broadly and in government.

The Polokwane Conference was a watershed not only for the ANC, but for the Alliance as whole, including for our own country. It has ushered in a new era for our alliance. However, one of the key challenges to consolidate advances brought about by Polokwane is to ensure that we use the post-Polokwane defeat of the 1996 class project to reconstitute a new (multi-class) unity that is left-leaning and worker biased. To do the latter will require exposing and marginalizing all forms of right-wing opportunism, while winning over the widest range of ANC-alliance forces on the basis of a principled strategic programme as reflected in our CC discussion document and MTV vision. For us as the SACP it is critical that we continuously re-affirm the multi-class character of the ANC, whilst maintaining its bias towards the working class.

It is critical to ensure that the advance is not narrowly appropriated by smaller groups and factions to serve their own interests. As pointed out in the Special Congress main discussion document, there is a new tendency which opportunistically seeks to appropriate the Polokwane advances to itself. Most impressive about Polokwane was that it brought together a whole range of progressive forces that constitute the core and the backbone of our movement (communists, the workers, youth, women, former MK soldiers, veterans and mass democratic movement activists), to defend and reclaim the ANC as a mass based national liberation movement. But at the same time there was an opportunist element that went with the wave of mass dissatisfaction, not in order to reclaim the ANC as a progressive mass movement, but in order to use it for its narrow, and often elitist interests. Our task is to seek to isolate this tendency, expose it for what it is, in order to cement the unity of all the progressive components of our national liberation movement.

In order to further consolidate the Polokwane advances, it is also essential that we strengthen alliance work, especially at sub-national levels, through sustained implementation of the Alliance programme of action. The SACP needs to prepare itself also to take the initiative, where necessary, to engage our allies at the branch level for the purposes of the implementation of the Alliance programme of action.

The Polokwane advance was accompanied by divergences between, on the one hand, the ANC, the Alliance and, on the other hand, government's orientation which subsequently led to the recall of former President Mbeki from office in September 2008. The SACP supported this recall as it was clear that the Polokwane fall-out had created an untenable situation in the relations between the ANC and some of its very senior cadres deployed in government. The recall also established a firm principle of recall in our movement, something that needs to be used where conditions require, also in order to deal with the many challenges relating to some of the deployments.

The recall of President Mbeki was used by those who lost democratically in Polokwane to form a break-away organization, COPE. As the SACP we had been aware that the recall of Mbeki was merely used as an excuse, as plans to breakaway from the ANC had already been hatched immediately after the Polokwane conference.

In Umsebenzi Online we correctly characterized this breakaway faction as a "spoilt coalition of class elites who benefitted immensely through the leadership positions they held in the ANC, and in the case of some, in the SACP and COSATU as well". In addition:

"The core of these was part of the 1996 class project that became dominant in both our movement and the state. They forged a different and new tripartite alliance between themselves occupying key government positions, sections of the domestic and global capitalist classes, and sections of the emergent black capitalist class.

"Many in this grouping effectively used their positions in the ANC and the state to accumulate wealth, dispense patronage and created a hierarchy of 'personalised followings' at various levels and components of our movement

"For the dissidents, the loss of leadership positions, especially in the ANC NEC, and some in the SACP and COSATU structures, means loss of access to the state institutions thus depriving them of the major means of private accumulation and capacity to dispense patronage

"This grouping had also actively sought to demobilize the ANC, turn it into a narrow electoralist political party, and mobilize our people only as 'voters' during election periods, so that they as 'leaders', continue to access state power and amass economic resources".

We also understood this grouping for what it was, joining a long list of anti-communist and anti-working class crusaders both inside and outside our movement; a matter we shall return to below. It is for these reasons that these dissidents have now found common cause with the Democratic Alliance in its attempts to undermine our revolution and stage a political comeback.

However COPE is now falling apart under the weight of the very problems they had caused inside the ANC, factionalism, a dog eats dog mentality, the fight for positions and resources and an inability to effectively relate to and mobilize the mass of the people on the ground. For too long they have been comfortable crown princes and princesses in the palace of the 1996 class project, and had long forgotten how to relate to the workers and the poor of our country.

Because of its class agenda, the 1996 class project had sought to marginalize the ANC allies, and at some stage even attempted to provoke a walkout by the SACP and COSATU from the alliance.

There are a number of lessons we need to learn from the COPE experience, including the following:

- The failure of this grouping to marginalize and defeat the SACP and COSATU whilst at the helm of the ANC and government was due to our ability to

steadfastly defend our independence, run SACP campaigns (many of which have resonance with the broader membership of the ANC itself), and do consistent grassroots work including forging a closer relationship with the organized working class

- That whilst defending the multi-class character of the ANC, the post-1994 democratic breakthrough, with ascendancy to power and new opportunities for accumulation by the previously oppressed, poses a new challenge for our revolution, thus necessitating strong working class organization and mobilization
- The need to consistently assert and defend the core principles of our national democratic revolution, especially the leading role of the working class, and giving priority to the interests of the workers and the poor of our country.

Perhaps the second most important development after Polokwane has been the ANC's overwhelming electoral victory in the April 2009 election. We do indeed want to use this occasion to thank all our cadres for running a successful SACP election campaign in support of the ANC, as well as our participation in the election campaign structures of the ANC to ensure this victory.

Particularly significant about this victory was the extent to which we participated in the development of the ANC Election Manifesto, and the fact that we have emerged with a consensus on five priority areas for our movement and government over the current term of this government. We discuss later in this report challenges for our Party towards the most thorough implementation of these manifesto commitments.

4. Anti-communism in its historical context and contemporary manifestations

We are seeking to advance and deepen a radical national democratic revolution in a period in which we are, amongst other things, witnessing a resurgence of anti-communism and anti-SACP postures (accompanied by a virulent Africanist tendency), interestingly not so much from our class enemies, but within the ranks of our own national liberation movement. It is therefore important for Congress to properly analyse the reasons for the re-emergence of this tendency, not in order for us to lock ourselves in a defensive mode, but as part of understanding the terrain upon which we seek to

build working class hegemony in key sites of power and struggle. This is informed by the fact that it is the working class that is most capable of leading and advancing a thorough transformation of South African society towards a society of solidarity, substantive equality and eradication of poverty.

Throughout the history of the SACP, we have been faced with a variety of anti-communist tendencies that have sought to destroy the existence of communists in our country, in defence of the greed and exploitative practices of capitalism. It is therefore important that at this particular juncture we understand the distinctions as well as the common thread that runs through these anti-communist tendencies. In some instances, it is a broadly anti-communist tendency, but in other instances it presents itself not so much as anti-communist and rather more specifically as an anti-SACP tendency

The (white) **capitalist class** – this class has been consistently opposed to the SACP throughout the 88 years of our existence. This opposition has taken various forms, depending on the balance of forces between the ruling class as a whole and the working class. Depending on the balance of forces it would use either naked violence or repression against communists or through an increased ideological offensive or naked appeal to narrow and sectarian (often Africanist and petty bourgeois) views especially found within elites both inside and outside the national liberation movement. During the earlier period of colonialism of a special type (1910-1950), anti-communism from this class ranged from naked repression (especially during the 1922 white mineworkers strike, through to a combination of repressive, ideological offensives and co-optive measures towards the white working class (1924-1950). During the war years, there was a temporary toleration of communist activism during the years of the Smuts regime, as there was a temporary co-incidence of interests in fighting against the war declared by the fascist regimes of Germany, Italy colluding with the imperialist Japanese interests in Asia during the 1940-1945 period.

With the ascendancy of the apartheid regime in 1948 in our country, political power shifted from a conservative (neo-colonial/liberal)/capitalist alliance into a neo-fascist/capitalist alliance. This alliance sought to roll back whatever minor liberal measures had been implemented by the prior regime, entrenching the racial division of labour and intensifying the intensified exploitation of the black working class through openly racist and sexist measures. This was partly necessitated by the need to exploit opportunities brought by the post-war reconstruction in Europe (and South Africa and South Africa's economic strength as a relatively developed, but mineral rich, semi-peripheral centre) the consequent demand for South Africa's mineral exports and the opportunities in the

manufacturing sector during this period. In the mid-to-late 1980s working class and black resistance against apartheid also progressively sought to overthrow not only the apartheid regime, but its capitalist system as well. The uncertainty brought about by this forced the capitalist classes to begin to earnestly explore a negotiated settlement with the national liberation movement led by the ANC.

The one consistent strategy, and ability, of the capitalist class throughout the period of colonialism of a special type (1910-1994) was its ability to strike deals and political arrangements with the various ruling political elites – from the British/Afrikaner political (and economic) alliance through to the apartheid regime – with mutual benefit to all sides. It was this experience and skill that the capitalist ruling class managed to use, given the particular balance of forces in the early 1990s, to strike a relationship with the 1996 class project through narrow BEE post-1994 till the present.

Despite all the advances and achievements by the ANC government over the last 15 years, these class deals have had the effect of marginalizing the workers and poor of our country, and in many respects (objectively) reducing our government into a welfarist, rather than transformational, mode of operation. It is this colonial type trajectory that the Alliance and government have to disrupt and transform in order to finally defeat both the legacy and continued reproduction of colonialism of a special type. It is not narrow BEE and the new capitalist sectors it has spawned that have the capacity to do this, but a well-organised and progressively hegemonic working class, at the head of what continues to be our (necessary) multi-class alliance of progressive forces.

The other variant of anti-communism has come from within the ranks of the national liberation movement itself. Its antecedents were those from the early years of the existence of the ANC/SACP (and the broader liberation movement (the expulsion of communists from the ICU in the late 1920s, through to the Pixley Seme power axis in the ANC against Josiah Gumede in the early 1930s, and the early years of the existence of the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) in mid-to-late 1940s).

This was followed by another wave of anti-communism through the 1950s breakaway of the PAC followed by the 1970s Gang of Eight. In the post 1994 period, this 'internal' anti-communism was fuelled by the IFP, followed by the UDM established by Holomisa, through to the (more sophisticated) 1996 class project, the breakaway of Cope and now the new tendency within the ANC that is trying to forcefully assert itself, especially after the April 2009 elections.

The 1996 class project perhaps expressed the most sophisticated variant of anti-communism within our own ranks. This was largely because it was led by a faction that had grown within the ranks of the SACP in the 1970s to the early 1990s. A faction that was able to use Marxist-Leninist rhetoric to try and demobilize and liquidate the South African Communist Party, also greatly assisted by its ascendancy to state power in 1994, and by forging an alliance with established domestic and (sections of) international capital. Amongst other things the 1996 class project sought to provoke (if not dare) the SACP and the progressive organized working class into launching a full frontal attack on the ANC led government and walk out of the Alliance or abandon socialism and liquidate itself. Ideologically it challenged the existence and sought to put the SACP into a corner by arguing that socialism cannot be built from the womb of a capitalist society.

It is however important to bear in mind that it is not the ANC that is anti-communist but it has been different groupings and factions at different times both inside and outside the ANC that have sought to steer, with spectacular failures, the ANC towards an anti-communist stance

Another anti-communist (perhaps more specifically anti CPSA/SACP) trend has been that from what we have called an ultra-left tendency. From the 1940s especially this has been a mixed bag of Trotskyite, workerist and anti-SACP formations existing largely, but not exclusively outside of the ANC and the SACP. Its early and more prominent formations were the Non-European Unity Movement, the small Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC, through to ultra-leftist, small 'social movements', and of late entryist elements which found their way into the party after opening up the SACP in the early 1990s.

Whilst the former two tendencies were largely informed by a (narrow and nationalistic) petty bourgeois tendency within our movement, post-1994 this anti-communism/anti-SACP tendency has been informed and influenced by ascendancy to state power and prospects of being part of (albeit a compradorial) emergent black sections of the capitalist class. In other words, whilst the anti-communism of the pre 1990 era was informed by a petty bourgeois ideological reaction to communism, the post-1994 anti-communism has been informed by the new emergent class interests accompanied by very real prospects of using state power or accumulated dependent BEE capital to capture our movement. After the political dislocation of the 1996 class project, the new tendency has become more desperate, more brazenly Africanist, but without a coherent ideological outlook. Instead the new tendency is opportunistically using the historical documents and positions of our movement to try and assert its new positions (eg an

opportunistic use of the clauses of nationalization in the Freedom Charter and the vulgarization of the characterization of our revolution as that seeking to liberate blacks in general and Africans in particular).

Interestingly the seeming desperation of the new tendency is also influenced by the desperate conditions of BEE capital in the light of the current global capitalist crisis and its impact on South Africa. What in fact appears as an articulation of the progressive clauses of the Freedom Charter is immediately betrayed by the naked class interests of trying to use the state to bail out dependent BEE capital. Ironically, but not surprisingly, the bail out for black capital simultaneously becomes the bail out and strengthening of white domestic capital upon which the former is entirely dependent.

This new tendency has its roots in what we might call "Kebble-ism" – in which some of the more roguish elements of capital, lumpen-white capitalists, handed out largesse and favours and generally sought to corrupt elements within our movement in order to secure their own personal accumulation agendas. Some of this largesse helped elements within our movement to emerge as capitalists in their own right. They, in turn, imitated the behaviour of their patrons, using largesse and favours to build up a network of cheer-leaders and political supporters to safe-guard their positions within the movement (sometimes defensively at a time when they were also being marginalized by the Mbeki inner-circle).

In particular, these elements of BEE capital have been exploring a class axis between themselves and the great mass of marginalized, alienated, often unemployed black youth. The material glue of this axis is the politics of patronage, of messiahs, and its tentative ideological form is a demagogic African chauvinism. Because of its rhetorical militancy the media often portrays it as "radical" and "left-wing" – but it is fundamentally right-wing, even proto-fascist. While it is easy to dismiss the buffoonery of some of the leading lieutenants, we should not underestimate the resources made available to them, and the huge challenge we all have when it comes to millions of increasingly alienated, often unemployed youth who are potentially available for all kinds of demagogic mobilization.

We do not use the term proto-fascist lightly, nor for the moment should we exaggerate it. However, there are worrying tell-tale characteristics that need to be nipped in the bud. They include the demagogic appeal to ordinary people's baser instincts (male chauvinism, paramilitary solutions to social problems, and racialised identity politics). They also include the turning of politics into "spectacle" (the German Marxist Walter

Benjamin once said that socialists politicize theatre, fascists do the reverse – turning politics into “theatre” – usually of a melodramatic kind). This, in turn, reinforces the nature of the relationship between “leaders” and their popular base – the latter become “spectators”, who clap and cheer in admiration at their patrons, and boo and jeer at rivals. The mass base is mobilized on the basis of being perpetual “spectator-victims” – not protagonists, not collective self-emancipators. Above all, however, it is the nature of the still rudimentary class axis, at play here, that should send out early danger signals. None of this means that we should simply abandon those involved in this tentative class-axis – the buffoonery is a source of increasing embarrassment to their current or erstwhile patrons and we should work to win over those BEE elements who have been tempted to explore this dangerous and ultimately self-defeating project. Likewise, the great majority of young militants who have flirted with this style of long nights of long knives in bottom-baring conferences, with symbolic coffins for rivals, are not beyond constructive engagement. However, it is only a principled and broad-based worker-hegemony that can reconfigure these forces into a progressive project.

The overwhelming majority of BEE elements have NOT gone off in this direction. Some, feeling threatened by both the left AND this chauvinistic right-wing – and of course ideologically constructing both the left and right-wing as the “same” thing – have made their way into COPE, and are exploring (or reconstituting) the 1996 class project’s privileged axis between established (white) capital and themselves. Increasingly this reconstituted 1996 class project is assuming an open political form (whereas previously it was a covert political arrangement, while an overt economic programme) – with growing cooperation between the DA and COPE on an oppositionist liberal platform of “defending the constitution”.

But the majority of the black BEE upper and middle strata remain within the ANC – partly out of loyalty and genuine commitment, and partly because the ANC remains the ruling party.

The task of the SACP in this conjuncture is to help to rally the maximum number of basically democratic and patriotic forces around a principled programme of transformation focused on the five major priorities of our electoral programme. This means, in the first instance, consolidating the unity of the working class with the great mass of marginalized urban and rural poor. To achieve this, we need to guard against the dangers of a narrow workerism, in which the legitimate aspirations of the formal working class and particularly of the formal public sector working class, dominate and marginalize the issues and aspirations of the informalised poor. We need to advance programmes and slogans that unite these two core popular constituencies (and they

include crime, education, health, rural development and decent jobs and sustainable livelihoods).

But we also need to win over the middle and upper strata among the black majority – this means exposing and defeating attempts at consolidating anti-left axes between them and other strata – whether with established capital (eg. on a liberal watch-dog platform, i.e. COPE), or with a demagogically mobilized popular base. It means, also, that in advancing our strategic transformational agenda (as outlined, for instance, in our CC discussion document) we need to rally the black middle and capitalist strata and all other democratic and patriotic forces. Given the ideological and material crises of global (and South African) capital – including the environmental crisis – there is both the possibility and necessity of developing a left-leaning patriotic alliance. A core potential element of such a multi-class patriotic and democratic alliance is a programme to transform our present growth path that locks us into a subordinate, semi-colonial status within the global capitalist system.

Like the 1996 class the new tendency does not equal the entirety of the ANC and the broader liberation movement, but represents an emergent class interest that seeks to capture our movement for narrow capitalist interests. This new tendency is deliberately seeking to isolate communists in particular and the organized working class in general by resuscitating an old and tired debate of 'two hats'. Dual membership (especially since the 1930s) and sometimes multiple membership (especially since the 1950s) has been one of the hallmarks and strengths of the ANC. Precisely because it is a broad movement it should seek to draw its membership from broader society, including progressives who may belong to a variety of other civic, trade union, and (in the case of the SACP) political organizations. The claim that communists want to take over the ANC is merely a rooi gevaar tactic, deliberately being played in order to try and consolidate the ANC as an organization for elites and capitalists. We are quite convinced that ordinary ANC members shall not be fooled, just as the 1996 class project failed to hoodwink them!

It is for all the above reasons, that this Special Congress must also deeply reflect on the past and contemporary challenges facing the SACP going forward. Our posture going forward must never be a defensive one, as if we were under siege. Instead it becomes even more important to strengthen our alliance, as well as deepen our activism as ANC members and cadres in our own right.

5. 'Socialism is the future, build it now': The changing character and tasks of the SACP post-1994

In order to map out the challenges facing the SACP, the working class, our entire liberation movement and society, it is also important to reflect on the role of the SACP over the past 15 years since our 1994 democratic breakthrough.

In the wake of the unbanning of the SACP in 1990, a necessary debate ensued within the SACP about its character and tasks in the wake of the new global and domestic realities in the early 1990s. The SACP was unbanned during a thoroughly contradictory period for socialist and other progressive forces in the global and domestic arenas. On the global arena, we were unbanned in a period where the eastern bloc socialist countries were collapsing, significantly marked by the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union.

On the domestic front there were huge advances with the apartheid regime on the back-foot and the public emergence of the national liberation movement as the foremost voice of the oppressed and exploited masses of the people of our country.

This necessitated a debate about the type of SACP we need to build after 1990. At the first Central Committee in Lusaka immediately after our unbanning there was a debate between those who felt that the SACP needed to remain a very small and largely symbolic entity (with some even arguing for its dissolution) while cadres focused on rebuilding the ANC as the single political centre to lead the last mile towards dislodging the apartheid regime, and those who felt that it was precisely at such periods that we needed an even stronger SACP. The latter view prevailed thus setting the stage for new debates inside a now legal SACP at our 8th Congress held at NASREC in 1991, mainly revolving around the character and new tasks for the SACP.

The one side of the debate was for maintaining the party as a small, vanguardist (as distinct from vanguard) Party organized along the lines of a Leninist Party in the conditions of underground. The opposing argument (under the banner of 'democratic socialism') argued for the rebuilding of the SACP as a mass party, given the new conditions of legality. What emerged out of that Congress was essentially a compromise position, that later came to be characterized as that of building a 'vanguard party with a mass character'. That is, we had to openly recruit and accept new members rather than reproducing the tight probationary process used in the underground period. At the

same time it was agreed that we needed to build quality Party cadres. Achieving an effective balance between size and quality of membership remains a challenge.

Alongside this debate was another parallel debate on whether the SACP needed to embark on mass activism or seek to ideologically influence and steer the ANC towards mass activism whilst remaining an 'intellectual and ideological centre' of our movement. The latter debate was largely resolved at the 10th Congress, which adopted a programme for the SACP to embark on mass mobilisation in its own right, principally through the annual Red October Campaign launched in 1999.

Building a vanguard party with a mass character and deciding to embark on SACP-led mass campaigns led to the significant growth of the Party that we have experienced over the last decade, but at the same time it has attracted into the party tendencies that had not been drawn into the Party since the 1940s. On the positive side, we drew a lot of members broadly from the workers and the poor of our country through mass campaigns that had an impact on the daily lives of the workers and the poor of our country. Through these campaigns, we cemented, in concrete struggles, our relationship with COSATU as the largest organizer of the working class on the shop-floor. In the process we also re-launched the YCL, which has added youth mass activism into the Party, thus enlarging the pool from which the SACP can recruit. The prestige of the SACP grew in leaps and bounds with the organized working class, communist youth and the rural poor joining our ranks, thus placing us in a position we had never been in since the decade of SACP mass activism of the 1940s.

But through the mass opening of the SACP we also drew into our ranks an entryist ultra-left, (but often collaborating with the right) tendency into the SACP. This entryist tendency is often drawn from an anti-Congress tradition that is thoroughly opposed to our own Marxist-Leninist theory and practice. It has sought to hijack, if not derail, the SACP from its Congress traditions and allies. This tendency has sought to exploit the SACP's own insistence on its independence towards anti-Alliance and anti-ANC positions. It has also sought to use our principled debate on the SACP's electoral options as a platform to sever our relations with our principled allies, specifically the ANC.

Of late, elements of this tendency are now in the process of forming a new political formation outside of, and in opposition to the SACP, but using such opposition to the SACP as its platform for breaking away. In many ways this tendency is operating in the same way as COPE, forming a breakaway, but simultaneously leaving some of its own

co-conspirators and associates within our organisation. Even more disturbing is that some within our own ranks treat this tendency as if it is part of a healthy and democratic debate within the SACP, thus unwittingly strengthening its destructive behaviour inside the SACP. Building the unity of the SACP does not mean toleration of entryists, but instead requires that we isolate and defeat this anti-SACP tendency! The isolation and destruction of this tendency is the precondition for building a more unified, but democratic SACP! Democracy and freedom of debate inside our party must not be reduced to or equated to ill-discipline or chaos.

The usual offensive of this tendency is to try and discredit the SACP in the run up to and during major events of the SACP, as is the case now in the run up to our Special Congress.

The principal anchor around which the SACP has been able to play an important role in our post-1994 political conjuncture was our historic 9th Congress Manifesto which anchored us around the appropriate strategic and programmatic perspective of 'Socialism is the future, build it now'. This perspective sought to link the national democratic revolution and the struggle for socialism as two distinct but yet inseparable struggles. It also sought to capture the reality that much as there is no prospect for an immediate advance towards a full-blooded socialist system in our country, the struggle for rolling back the capitalist market and constructing elements of socialism are possible and necessary in the here and now, and are also essential elements of consolidating a thorough-going national democratic revolution.

'Socialism is the future, build it now' also captured the twin realities of the necessity of both an independent SACP and an SACP that was also part of a broader mass based alliance led by the African National Congress. It also captured the fact that much as the 1994 democratic breakthrough was a major advance in our revolution, yet it was 'aluta continua', as the key strategic objectives of the national democratic had not yet been met. In order to realize these strategic objectives there was a necessity for both an independent political party of the working class, working in alliance with the ANC and a progressive trade union movement, in this instance COSATU.

However, much as this strategic and programmatic perspective helped to ground us in the realities of the post-1994 period, it was limited by the fact that we did not have a concrete programme and set of activities of our own that were both independent and contributing to mass activism of the workers and the poor of our country. In fact between 1993 and 1998 there was a significant organizational decline of our party, with very weak structures on the ground and with no visible programme of its own.

It was with the adoption of a concrete programme at our 10th Congress, immediately followed by the launch of our Red October Campaign in 1999 that gave concrete expression to mass, communist-led activism that laid the basis for the visibility of the SACP as a force in the post-1994 period. This programme, and our Red October Campaign, also deepened the presence and influence of the SACP amongst organized workers, and helped to defend the SACP and the working class from one of the most serious offensives by the 1996 class project against our party and the working class as a whole.

It was this programme-driven activism that also defeated attempts by the 1996 class project to liquidate the Party, through amongst others a privatization offensive, the downsizing of the state, and the notorious 'briefing notes' of the ANC that aimed to isolate the SACP (and COSATU) from the mass of the workers and the poor of our country, but especially from the mass base of the ANC.

It was also this programmatic activism, strengthened through our 2002 11th Congress programme, and adoption of our medium term vision, that laid the basis for the subsequent crisis of the 1996 class project. The 2005 ANC NGC marked the peak of the monumental failure of the 1996 class project, and the capitalist class that backed it, to transform our national liberation movement into a narrow, electoralist party that used our people as voting fodder to bolster an elitist project, whose only generosity to the mass of our people was a welfarist project of social grants and pathetic housing settlements located kilometers away from centres of work and other economic opportunities.

It is by learning from all the above experiences that we can be able to properly understand the challenges of the conjuncture and map a way forward for the SACP and our revolution as a whole, guided by our overall strategic and programmatic slogan, 'Socialism is the Future, Build it Now'.

6. Progress towards the realization of the key objectives of our Medium Term Vision

It is important that we use this Special Congress to honestly assess progress towards the realization of our MTV, as contained and updated in our programme, 'The South

African Road to Socialism'. This assessment must also include new issues and challenges that have arisen, especially since Polokwane and in the wake of the 2009 April electoral victory.

6.1 Building working class hegemony in the state

Guided by our 12th Congress programme, as elaborated in our 2008 policy conference resolutions, the SACP has sought to, amongst others, contest elections as part of the ANC-led alliance, under the banner of the ANC election manifesto. In the wake of this approach, there are a number of new issues and challenges that have arisen that this Special Congress must discuss.

The first, and most critical, one is that in the wake of the Polokwane advance, which has opened a number of doors, the SACP decided to forward its most leading cadre into specifically the government, and broadly the state. This decision was informed by, amongst other things, the necessity for the SACP to participate in state structures in a new way that has the possibility of advancing the objectives of the ANC as captured in the Election Manifesto, incorporating some of the perspectives of the SACP regarding the challenges of the NDR in the current period.

Our new mode of participation in government was also informed by the fact that this time around we were effectively consulted by the ANC on all the major aspects of governance, thus paving the way for deepening common alliance perspectives on the transformation of South African society. These common perspectives were consolidated through the May 2008 Alliance Summit and the subsequent Alliance economic summit later that year, our participation in the ANC NEC January 2009 lekgotla, as well as in our mid-November 2009 Alliance summit.

The key challenge for the SACP in this new period of a reconfiguring alliance is that of simultaneously maintaining the independence of each alliance partner whilst together working towards an inclusive transformative project whose primary objective is to address the needs of the majority of the people of our country, the workers and the poor.

The advances made in Polokwane mark an important victory for the SACP and the working class in their struggle to rescue the ANC from the clutches of a neo-liberal, capitalist backed, 1996 class project. It is a significant rolling back of the agenda to marginalize the SACP and COSATU from the ANC and governance. This opens up huge

spaces for the SACP to consolidate the impact of the working class over the character and direction of the democratic state.

It is however important for the SACP not to be submerged by the new realities whilst at the same time not walking away from the opportunity to participate in governance in a manner that does not contradict our strategic objective of addressing the needs of the workers and the poor of our country.

Our participation in governance is also informed by the fact that the Polokwane resolutions mark a significant departure from the agenda pursued prior to that conference, including resolutions that commit to a developmental state in favour of the workers and the poor, the development of an industrial strategy aimed at transforming the current colonial-type growth path, and a government committed to listening to the overwhelming majority of our people.

However, there are also new challenges that the SACP has to confront and raise forthrightly within this new political environment. The fundamental challenge is that of further elaborating on a developmental state, not in an oppositionist manner, but as part of the overall thrust of the goals of the ANC-led alliance. Part of building a developmental state is already contained in our main Special Congress discussion document, that of addressing the fragmented nature of the state and lack of a coordinated planning capacity.

The SACP welcomes the establishment of a National Planning Commission, whose primary objective is to overcome the fragmented nature of the state and to have coordination across all the spheres of government. This Congress will, however, have to further elaborate on how we believe such a planning commission should function.

As highlighted in our discussion document, we need to mobilize against all attempts to subject the developmental state to the logic of the free market, in a manner that privileges the interests of the capitalist class and its compradorial BEE type networks over the interests of the workers and the poor of our country.

A new area that the SACP will have to focus upon is how the defeated agenda of privatization of the late 1990s continues to seek to resurrect itself through new ways of subjecting the state to the interests of an unfettered free market and its narrow BEE tentacles. One such form is that of the increasing use of Public Private Partnerships to imprison the state within the logic of private capital. It may as well be that in a period

of a mixed economy, PPPs maybe unavoidable (eg. independent power producers particularly in the renewables sector, BRTs, and transforming the anarchic minibus sector), but in such instances we need to make sure that such PPPs are subjected to the discipline of our developmental agenda, rather than subjecting the state to the logic of the capitalist market.

For instance, private interests in the health sector are seriously exploring ways and means of capturing the proposed National Health Insurance Scheme through PPPs, by seeking to entice government's planned investment into the public health system through the rebuilding of hospitals and clinics via such private arrangements. These PPPs are usually arrangements where public hospitals and clinics are built through private sector money, where the state is locked into being a tenant for decades, paying for the use of such buildings run by the private sector. These PPPs can also easily be extended to the private supply of drugs, provision of private health personnel as well as many other services under the guise of private sector support to the NHI and public health facilities. In this way the whole planned NHI can be captured by private capitalist interests in a manner that would undermine the very logic of a public sector led NHI. It is going to be important for the SACP to be vigilant against such arrangements, as these are likely to undermine the NHI.

Instead the SACP must campaign for investment of public moneys into the transformation of the public health sector, and ensure that the capitalist market is rolled back from the provision of health care facilities and services. This must form an important component of our campaign for an affordable and equitable health care system, and defeat all attempts of the corporate capture of our health system by the capitalist system in the name of supporting an NHI. This is going to be a crucial struggle for the building of a developmental state and a progressive health care system. Elements of the capitalist class, which have grudgingly accepted the introduction of an NHI are already positioning themselves through planned PPPs to try and capture the resources to be poured by the state into an NHI.

The above struggle must also be buttressed by an intensified campaign against outsourcing of important public sector services (cleaning, the building of public hospitals and clinics, as well as provision of food and other services). This constitutes a new front of struggle in building working class hegemony in the state.

It is indeed possible that elements of the capitalist class are also considering similar arrangements in the building of schools, rural development infrastructure, and other

planned government investment into infrastructure. It is for instance of no surprise that the DA has reacted negatively against the withdrawal of labour broking by the ministry of police, as labour broking in itself constitutes an important method of holding the state hostage in its transformation agenda.

6.2 Building working class hegemony in the economy

The single biggest obstacle in building working class hegemony in the economy is the current recession underway globally and in our country. It is therefore important that we mobilize not only for defensive measures against the current global capitalist crisis, but we also embark on offensive measures to transform the current growth path in our country.

As the SACP we welcome the recent Alliance Summit commitments to thoroughly review macro-economic policy, including a review of the mandate of the Reserve Bank, and seek to align macro-economic policy to overarching micro-economic and industrial policy objectives. This marks a significant and positive departure from the neo-liberal economic perspectives that had dominated our economic policy since 1996.

The ANC election manifesto commitment to the creation of decent work, the commitment to strengthening the public sector, including the creation of more jobs, as well as government's commitment to very extensive investment into infrastructure, is indeed a far cry from the 1996 agenda of downsizing the state and the arrogant claim that government cannot create jobs.

A key challenge for this Congress to discuss is that of ensuring that the increasing dependence of private capital on state infrastructure investment and procurement is effectively used to transform the current growth path. If and as when an economic recovery happens we need to ensure that a new growth path emerges as we cannot simply return to what the economic situation and growth path were some two years ago. In other words what concrete offensive measures should we be campaigning for in order to radically transform the colonial type economic trajectory in our country? Or put differently, what opportunities does the current capitalist crisis present for us to embark on a major offensive against the capitalist system itself? And how do we use this crisis to take working class organization in the economy to higher levels?

To answer these questions we will have to elaborate on the resolutions taken at the Alliance Summit on economic transformation.

But one certain task is for the SACP to unapologetically and lead a struggle for an offensive against capitalism and its decadent ideas, through a consistent critique of the

capitalist system, both as a global system and our own domestic reality. The critique of capitalism must consistently be accompanied by our advancement of socialist alternatives and concrete struggles to roll back capitalism and its market.

The immediate terrain against which to fight for the above must be an advancement of concrete policies to transform the semi-colonial character of our growth path, whilst simultaneously exposing the compradorial relationship that monopoly capital seeks to forge with the emerging black sections of the capitalist class.

6.3 Working class hegemony in the workplace

This Congress will have to seriously reflect on how the capitalist class has sought to roll back the gains made by the working class since the adoption of the 1996 Constitution, guaranteeing the right to strike, and the passage of the Labour Relations Act and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act in the mid 1990s. The adoption of our new constitution and the progressive transformation of labour market legislation have been important victories for the working class. But these have tended in practice to only protect 'permanent' workers in the formal and urban workplace employment. Other sections of the working class have been marginalized through increasing casualisation, outsourcing and the ejection and intense exploitation of the rural working class.

In the urban working places the capitalist class has sought to roll back increased worker rights through a combination of intensified outsourcing, casualisation, labour brokerage and an increase in the employment of more vulnerable labour from SADC countries.

In the 'white' countryside there has been an increase in the expulsion and displacement of black farm-workers through increased mechanization and periodic evictions, as well as intensified exploitation of the black working class in the countryside through brazen flouting of labour laws and removal of farm-workers and farm-dwellers from housing and schooling in white owned farms.

Since the passage of progressive legislation there has also been a phenomenal increase of labour brokers. The increase in labour brokerage has further fragmented South Africa's workplace and diluted trade union organization.

It is therefore absolutely important for the SACP to throw its full weight against labour broking as part of an important struggle to transform the workplace in favour of the black working class.

One of South Africa's biggest weaknesses has been the lack of skills development, both in the formal education system as well as in the workplace, thus turning what would

otherwise be abundant skills (artisans, etc) into scarce skills. Scarce skills are essentially a reflection of the reproduction of the racial division of labour, continuing to privilege the shrinking white, and other non-African, working classes in South Africa's workplace.

Much as government over the last 15 years has placed a lot of emphasis on employment equity, this has tended to focus more on middle class professions (important as this may be), with little emphasis on the skilling of the black working class as a whole. This has been reflected in the growth of the black middle classes, particularly in the state, but with worsening skills shortages amongst the black working class.

Therefore a major struggle for the transformation of South Africa's workplace is that of intensifying the struggle for a skills revolution, buttressed by mainstreaming intensified ideological training of the working class to be more than just human robots, but to also be combatants for a developmental state. This means a radical transformation of our education and training landscape to produce a highly skilled but socially and politically conscious working class.

But in the short-to-medium term it would be unrealistic to hope for drastically increased employment opportunities and high skills for the majority of the South African people. It is therefore important for the SACP to continue to struggle for the creation of other forms of sustainable livelihoods for the poor of our country. It is for this reason that the building and capacitation of co-operatives and other forms of SMEs must remain a priority struggle for the SACP. Whilst we should support the skilling of the majority of South Africa's working class, we must at the same time avoid a workerist tendency that tends to reduce sustainable livelihoods only to formal employment. It is for this reason that the SACP must promote an all-round struggle for building sustainable livelihoods for the majority of our people, especially those in the urban informal settlements and rural areas.

All of the above pose the challenge of deepening organization of the peripheralised working class and promoting other forms of sustainable livelihoods, like building a strong co-operative movement. Whilst there has been sustained organization and mobilization of the working class in the workplace, there has simultaneously been very weak organization of the casualised, peripheralised and rural working class in South Africa. In addition, the colonial-type economic trajectory has placed the organized working class in a state of defensive, instead of offensive, forms of struggle and organization (defending jobs, fighting against retrenchments, and weak focus on the skilling and reskilling of the working class). If we are to move out of purely defensive

measures for the working class, this means that the workplace needs to be transformed into an active site for offensive struggles to roll back the unilateral restructuring of the workplace by the capitalist class.

Capitalist methods of resisting the implementation of progressive labour legislation have led to a serious fragmentation of the working class. The SACP is well placed to wage a struggle for a united working class located in different sites of exploitation as part of transforming South Africa's workplace and the current colonial-type trajectory of our economy.

6.4 Building working class hegemony in communities

Since 1994 there has been a gradual decline in progressive organization of communities, especially black working class and poor communities located in the townships, informal settlements and the former Bantustans. The extent of this paucity of organization has been reflected in the very deep crisis (albeit with some improvements of late) of our ally, SANCO.

The semi-anarchic protests that have rocked our country over the last few years are an expression of both the deteriorating conditions in which our communities find themselves and a lack of credible, sustained organization in many communities. This is also a reflection of our weakness in building and sustaining mass campaigns outside of the election campaigns. The void created in this regard allows for all forms of protests and negative campaigning that has also led to xenophobic and other forms organization.

We have not managed to build upon the positive mood and hope often generated by our election campaigns into sustained positive community mobilization and participation in local government, amongst other things.

The systemic features of our largely untransformed, semi-colonial capitalist growth path, the failure to carry forward rural development, and the related active reproduction of apartheid spatial patterns despite 15 years of non-racial democracy, have turned many of our urban, peri-urban and rural townships into pressure-cookers of seething malcontent and marginalisation. With our Red October campaigns, the SACP has succeeded in touching upon and high-lighting critical issues of concern to working class and poor communities. However, we have not always succeeded in sustaining our campaigns, or rather, in anchoring our campaigns so that they are sustained organically from within communities themselves.

The crisis in our rural areas and in our townships often results in inward-looking rivalry and fragmented protests and other negative symptoms in which the poor are often bashing the poor – male violence against women and children, competing taxi warlords, spaza shop rivalries, sometimes violent clashes over tenders resulting in factionalism within our own structures. Sometimes this leads to self-defeating protests in which trains and buses are destroyed, and municipal property and public libraries burned.

The 1996 class project politics of “welfarist”, top-down bureaucratic “delivery” is part of the problem and not part of the solution. It is NOT a question of seeking “more delivery” into the same pressure-cooker hot-spots. Rather, it is a question of:

- Uniting working class and poor communities around a strategic agenda of transformation that raises broader questions of the wider town, or city, or countryside – and not just of demanding more delivery into the same overcrowded and under-resourced ghettos. We need to raise calls (and actively campaign) for mixed-income human settlement developments within our towns and cities, for instance.
- Building local organs of popular power and finding more effective ways of institutionalizing this power so that it is able to transform the local state from below. Recent proposals to have elected (rather than appointed) ward committees that have powers over IDPs, etc; and also means for better institutionalizing the right of communities to effect the recall of their ward councilors, for instance, need to be considered in this regard.

The crises of underdevelopment in our communities have sometimes been captured by local political entrepreneurs and ‘tenderpreneurs’ who have demagogically used popular frustrations to wage their own individual battles for access to local state power. This is at the heart of many of the so-called ‘service delivery protests’.

The SACP has over the years managed to organize significant sectors of our communities around the provision of basic services through our annual Red October Campaign, showing the potential of proactive and progressive mass organization in changing the conditions of our people for the better.

The biggest gap on this front has been the failure of the ANC itself to lead mass campaigns for local transformation, to build organs of popular power and to fight against corruption. There remains a huge space for progressive mobilization of our communities to change their own lives for the better. This Special Congress will have to discuss these matters very seriously and come up with strategies and tactics to ensure

that the way in which local government functions and is resourced is radically transformed.

It is in the light of the above that we are proposing that we once more declare the year 2010 'The year of the SACP branch'. This is informed by the fact that we are in the midst of the restructuring of the SACP so that it builds branches along the lines of the voting districts. Secondly, emphasis on the SACP branch must be related to building popular power on the ground to lay a better foundation for the turn around in local government and better preparations for the elections.

6.5 The ideological struggle and the battle of ideas

The SACP, principally through its mass campaigns, has managed to remain a strong ideological force amongst the majority of the workers and the poor of our country, a reality that is begrudgingly conceded to by the often hostile commercial media. Through our campaigns we have managed to maintain some form of presence in many of our communities flying the red banner, giving hope to the workers and the poor of our country.

Through our own internal media we have attempted to provide an alternative interpretation of the world and South Africa, despite all the odds on a terrain dominated by the mainstream bourgeois media.

Our key challenges on the ideological front and terrain of the battle of ideas is the need to build and strengthen the capacity of our cadres to adequately perform this work. Each SACP activity and campaign must include a media strategy (both our internal media, pamphleteering, and external media, especially engagement with community media and bourgeois media as well).

A key entry point to this work is the fact that the ideology of neo-liberalism is in deep crisis, and we should therefore intensify our critique of capitalism and advance our socialist perspectives on all fronts, and even more boldly.

6.6 The necessity for anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist and internationalist struggle

Although there are indications of modest recovery in many parts of the world, including within SA, the world capitalist system remains in deep crisis, and this crisis is impacting with great severity on the great majority of the world's people. One billion people are living in hunger world-wide, while farmers in the EU dump a million kilograms of milk powder in a single day. Another one billion people are now living in squatter camps in

Asia, Latin America and Africa. Hundreds of millions of workers have lost their jobs in this recession, small farmers have been dispossessed of their land by banks, loan sharks and agri-business, and hundreds of millions more workers and middle-class strata have seen their life's savings disappearing into thin air.

What is more, there is now an overwhelming global scientific consensus that the current world capitalist accumulation path is carrying the entire human civilization into destruction through profit-driven depletion of natural resources and the destruction of the bio-physical conditions for human life on our planet.

A once prominent member of the 1996 class project once boasted that he was "too red to be green". As South African communists we say today: "We are too red NOT to be green". The struggle to reduce carbon emissions, the struggle to save humanity's common-wealth— our seas and rivers, our forests, our bio-diversity, the very air we breathe — this is a struggle against the profit-maximising greed of the world capitalist system. To be red, is to be green.

"Together, let us save our planet from capitalist plunder and destruction"

Since our 12th Congress, we have taken important steps towards the creation of a network of progressive forces on our continent. In 2008 we held an inaugural meeting of the African Left Network in Johannesburg, and we have committed to hold such a gathering annually (due to elections we were not able to achieve this objective in 2009).

We do need to deepen intra-continental progressive relations and solidarity as part of laying a foundation to rebuild a left movement on the continent. Priority attention must be paid to those areas where there is existence of some form of progressive left organization as a stepping stone to rebuilding a continent wide left political movement. This is indeed not going to be an easy task, but it does nevertheless require that we intensify work on this front.

During the latter half of next year, the SACP will be hosting the international meeting of workers and communist parties of the world. This is an important opportunity to strengthen our own left ideas internally, as well as a critical platform to link our African Left Network, Latin American left forces and the global communist and workers formations.

The task of strengthening the African Left Network is also integrally linked to our anti-imperialist struggle and the critique of capitalism especially in the wake of the current global capitalist crisis.

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All the above terrains of struggle must be engaged from the standpoint of seeking to address the three deeply interrelated contradictions that the national democratic revolution seek to address. For instance, it is women who bear the most of the brunt in the structure and functioning of the often patriarchal state, the most exploited in the economy, and the most discriminated against in the workplace. It is women who bear most of the brunt in lack of basic services, often being the ones who have to fetch wood and water, and cook for families.

In all these terrains of struggle gender inequalities are often daily reproduced, thus subjecting women to the worst forms of oppression and exploitation. Unless the struggle for gender equality and against exploitation is consciously factored in, and mobilized for, it is indeed possible that we can build working class hegemony only for males, whilst women remain in their subordinate status.

Therefore, building working class hegemony in all the six key sites of power must centrally mean the build of both male and female working class power in the whole of society.

7. The organizational tasks of the SACP towards 2012

The overarching challenge facing our party and the entire national liberation movement is that of the accelerated implementation of the five priorities of the ANC-led election manifesto. There is no contradiction between the objectives of our MTV and the ANC election manifesto. Instead there is a complementarity between the two, in that the goals of the election manifesto cannot be realized without building working class hegemony in society. Building working class hegemony in society is also not an abstract task, it must be built through concrete struggles to realize the five priorities of the manifesto.

The struggle for the accelerated implementation of the ANC-led Alliance Manifesto is going to be a site of intense struggles both in wider society as well within our broader movement. A key site of struggle is already that over the implementation of the National Health Insurance as well as the complete overhaul and strengthening of our public health system. Powerful capitalist interests in the private health sector, in alliance with some in our own broader movement who have business interests in the sector, are

already involved in intense behind the scenes lobbying for either a total abandonment of the idea of an NHI or to try and build a watered down version of the NHI, imprisoned by the interests of private capital and/or through Public Private Partnerships that favour the capitalist classes.

These capitalist forces in the health sector have for months now been embarking on a media offensive trying to discredit the NHI, with multiple figures of billions of rands being thrown up as the cost of the NHI and therefore projecting such a scheme as unaffordable.

It is for these reasons that we need to deepen our campaign for the establishment of a quality and affordable public health care system with the NHI at the centre.

On the education front, the SACP must throw its full weight, and where necessary lead, in the ANC campaign to transform our education system. This means mobilizing local people's education committees to make our schools functional and SADTU, for instance, must play a leading role in ensuring that the non-negotiables are implemented; an intensified focus on skills development and the strengthening of the Further Education and Training Colleges, and the transformation of our university system to ensure that it is aligned with our overall developmental objectives.

The SACP needs to ensure that we re-orient our rural districts and branches to prioritise the task of building and strengthening the motive forces for rural transformation, especially the building of people's land committees and the organization of farm-workers and farm-dwellers. We have long adopted this as our programme of action, but our rural structures seem not to be responding adequately to this challenge. Whilst it is important for the SACP to have an overarching programme of action, but our test as a vanguard party lies in prioritization of programmes in line with local and regional realities. The Special Congress will have to discuss this matter extensively with a view to directing our rural structures to take up rural transformation struggles in earnest.

Key to the challenge of creating decent work is the strengthening of the progressive trade union movement, principally COSATU. Related to this must be the intensification of government's programme to develop an overarching industrial policy, a comprehensive human resources development strategy. The SACP must also intensify its efforts to build a progressive co-operative movement, not as a substitute to decent work, but as an obvious necessity to create opportunities for sustainable livelihoods especially also for those out of work. Underpinning this must be the intensification of our policy work and activism in aligning our macro-economic policies to our micro-

economic policies, including the implementation of the Alliance resolutions on changing the mandate of the Reserve Bank to include employment.

A critical area that will require our attention in the coming period is that of the nature and functioning of the National Planning Commission. The SACP welcomes the establishment of the National Planning Commission by government. The composition, structure and priorities for the National Planning Commission are matters that require serious reflection at this Congress and beyond.

8. Towards an SACP Programme of action for 2010

We propose that our programme of action for 2010 must be based on the slogan: "Together, let us build a society based on People's Needs" "Together begin to build socialism now". The SACP must declare the year 2010, as the year of the branch, in order to focus all our structures on strengthening our branches. Strengthening our branches must not be reduced to convening of BECs and BGMs, important as these may be, but to build the capacity of our branches to embark on local activism and mass mobilization, including taking up issues affecting workers and communities. This should also be used to accelerate the implementation of our resolution to build branches based on voting districts.

Focusing on strengthening the SACP branch must simultaneously mean deepening our support for the recruitment and advancement of women with the SACP structures at all levels, as well as supporting the building of an even stronger Young Communist League (YCL). The strengthening of women cadres and building of a vibrant YCL are the only guarantors for strengthening the SACP itself as the vanguard of South Africa's working class, and ensuring its future role as an indispensable force in our national democratic revolution.

This coming year the SACP must focus on the education and health campaigns, as well as the serious revival of our financial sector campaign. These issues are at the heart of building a society based on meeting people's needs. Whilst the alliance has focused much attention on the public development finance institutions, it is the responsibility of the SACP to struggle for the state to direct and steer the private financial sector towards transformation and investment into developmental projects. This must include both the private banking sector as well as worker retirement funds. We also need to ensure that our industrial strategy must also include the transformation of the private financial sector.

Our weakness on this front is now being fully exploited by the financial sector capitalists to roll back the gains we have made through our financial sector campaign over the years.

Related to this must be our continued focus on the transformation of local government and buttress government turn-around strategy for municipalities through mass mobilization and organization. The transformation of local government to serve the interests of the people as a whole will also be the only guarantee that we liberate the majority of the women of our country from the oppression of the burdens of extreme poverty.

As part of achieving all of the above, we must pay particular attention to the rebuilding of the alliance at subnational level. Focusing on branch work and taking up issues towards building a society based on people's needs, must also be a platform for joint alliance campaign to implement the Alliance programme of action.

9. Conclusion

The Central Committee, and indeed the Special Congress, must assess the achievement and setbacks of the two alliance summits and the Alliance economic summit held since our 12th Congress. An assessment must be made on whether the Alliance programme of action has been adequately implemented, the obstacles towards such implementation, and action to be taken to ensure that such programme is indeed implemented.

A critical issue that needs to be reflected upon is the character and strength of the SACP itself. Whilst our Party has grown significantly, especially over the last ten years, it is important that we reflect on the quality of our cadres as part of building the SACP as a vanguard Party. Is it perhaps not time now to focus a bit less on quantitative growth but focus on the qualitative growth of our Party?

To be a communist is not an insult, but it is an honour and a badge we must wear with pride. There is no more noble a cause than that of fighting for the workers and the poor, and to end all forms of exploitation and oppression, as well as to fight against all forms of prejudices and chauvinisms, including patriarchy.

Let us use this occasion to also celebrate being communists! We must on this occasion celebrate our achievements over the past 88 years, but by also further committing ourselves to redouble our efforts in fighting against all forms of injustices.

We shall indeed do this inspired by all the communist heroes and heroines who have come before us.

We shall also do this because we are indeed the sons and daughters of 'kitchen girls' and 'garden boys'.

We shall do this because the road we seek to travel has been travelled by Bill Andrews, Moses Kotane, Dora Tamana.....

Amandla!