

THE TWO PILLARS OF OUR STRUGGLE

Reflections on the Relationship between the ANC and SACP

by Sol Dubula

Sixty years have now passed since the pioneers of South African communism met in Cape Town on July 30th 1921, and made their inaugural appeal "to all South African workers, organised and unorganised, white and black, to join in promoting the overthrow of the capitalist system, the outlawry of the capitalist class, and the establishment of a commonwealth of workers throughout the world".

This first Manifesto of the Communist Party of South Africa rang out with the language of militancy and revolt. It pledged that the newly-formed Party would henceforth act as the "revolutionary vanguard of the Labour Army of South Africa" and spread the "communist gospel" amongst the workers. It called for an end to "futile reformism" and for a "great push" by the industrial masses of all races in alliance with the rural toilers, to deliver a "knockout blow" to the system.

No other political organisation in our country, or indeed in the whole continent, had yet spoken with such uncompromising revolutionary zeal. It was here, in our land, that the first seed of Marxism-Leninism was sown in Africa.

Yet, looking back on this document with the benefit of hindsight there are some puzzling silences. Nothing is said of the foreign conquest, the theft of land, the racist monopoly of the major means of production, state power, and political rights, which provide and protect the varying degrees of social and economic privilege which accrue to all with a white skin, to whatever class they belong. In short, the heavy weight of national oppression which every black, be he worker or not, carries like a millstone around his neck, seems to be missing from the scale of struggle.

But it would be ahistorical to explain these omissions by the simplistic charge that these early communists were completely blind to the reality around them, or that, being aware of this reality, they were influenced solely by their class origins in the relatively privileged aristocracy of white labour.

Judged by the level of the political forces of the day, the manifesto soars to unprecedented heights, it constitutes an unconditional break with the reformist and opportunistic politics of the white labour movement. The manifesto calls for mobilisation against "the accepted skiet-skiet Native policy" and pledges support for "any genuine revolt of the masses against tyranny". It looks forward to a South Africa in which "none shall be master and none servant." Above all, it gives top priority to raising the consciousness of "cheap docile labour" (black) and regards its entry into the working class movement as "the most deadly blow South Africa can deal to world capitalism". This was certainly not the language of the sell-out labour leaders of the time; it was already clearly the language of the communist revolutionary. But it was the language of the communist revolutionary situated in a very specific moment of time.

The Historical Background

We must remember that South African communists were not alone in believing that, in the wake of October 1917, the world socialist revolution was imminent. In South Africa, the white worker, comparatively well organised and making up the bulk of the "industrial masses", had not yet won his seat at the ruler's table and still expressed a degree of class hostility towards capitalism. The newly-emerging black proletariat was small in number and lacked effective industrial organisation. Faced with what turned out to be a utopian perspective of a socialist breakthrough in South Africa (a breakthrough which Marxism told them could only be based on the industrial working class), these pioneers of South African communism nourished the forlorn hope that there still remained sufficient

revolutionary potential in the white working class to deliver a "knockout blow" to the capitalist system.'

How then did they bridge the gap between the two fundamental realities of the South African social structure — class exploitation and national oppression? Inspired by the Bolshevik example and by the hopes of a spreading world socialist revolution, they believed that the solution of the national question in South Africa would follow the seizure of worker's power which would provide the base from which to proceed to free South Africa's oppressed national groups. After all, was it not true that the Bolshevik victory was already on the way to transforming the Tsarist "prison-house of nations" into a community of free peoples?

To complete the picture as it presented itself to a 1921 Marxist revolutionary, we must also recall the character and level of the national movement of the period. The formation of the African National Congress nine years earlier — the first national movement of Africans on our continent — was an event of great revolutionary significance. But, as with the early communists, the new national movement remained, for some time, a hostage of other objective limitations.

By the early 20's, the ANC's leadership was still dominated by a small group of black intellectuals and traditional tribal leaders. The aim it had set itself of creating a single African (as opposed to tribal) consciousness, was yet some distance from being fulfilled. Examined in the light of the present-day revolutionary militancy of the ANC, its early approach to struggle had many of the qualities of a cap-in-hand nationalism. It stood for the encouragement of "a spirit of loyalty to the British crown and all lawful authority" and pledged "to bring about better understanding between the white and black inhabitants". Some of its leaders went as far as to acknowledge "the superiority of the white race". Even as late as 1923 the ANC continued to endorse the Rhodes white-supremacist formula of "equal rights for all civilised men". In 1928, its House of Chiefs resolved against cooperation with the Communist Party, swayed by the argument that "the Tsar was a great man in his country, of royal blood like us chiefs, and where is he now!"

It is against this background that the communists were tempted to dismiss the ANC as a "bourgeois Congress". The formative limitations of the national movement were thus an additional factor which helped to blind socialist thinkers to the revolutionary potential of black nationalism and stood in the way of the correct elaboration of the key question of the South African revolution — the relationship

between class and national struggle.

These then were the imperfect beginnings of the Communist Party and the ANC; bodies which were fathered by the two most important determinants in South Africa's socio-economic structure — class exploitation and national oppression — and which reflected the two complementary streams of revolutionary consciousness and revolutionary organisation.

It is necessary to study the early period, not as a mere historical exercise but because the history of the struggle in the last sixty years and, indeed, the coming struggle for people's power, revolves around the very questions which posed themselves from the first day in the life of the Party. It is these questions which, throughout the whole period, continued to surface in one form or another; they had, and continue to have, a most direct bearing on the movement's ideological formation and, even more importantly, on its revolutionary practice.

Ideological Advance

The Party began to swing away from its exclusive "class against class" position within a short time of its formation. The early shift of emphasis towards African liberation rapidly reflected itself in the changed composition of the membership. By 1928 it was no longer an all-white affair and its African membership made up 90% of the total. Influenced by its own experience and by Comintern discussions and directives, the Party was, in 1928, decades ahead of any other organisation on the continent of Africa in advancing the concept of black majority rule under the slogan of an "independent Native Republic" as a stage towards the overthrow of capitalism. But it was to take many more years before the strategic implications of the relationship between class and national struggle were to be more adequately synthesised in the form of the 1962 Programme of the South African Communist Party (The Road to South African Freedom) adopted at the Party's sixth underground Conference in Johannesburg.

The ANC also travelled a long road of internal debate and contradiction before it reached its present level of revolutionary nationalism. One of the major catalysts of the ideological leap forward was the 1948 crop of militants in the ANC Youth League led by men like Tambo, Sisulu and Mandela, and supported by leading communists in the ANC leadership like Kotane, Marks and Mofutsanyana. In the Indian Congress too the old moderate leadership was ousted and men like Dadoo not only succeeded in

radicalising the politics of resistance amongst the Indian community, but also helped set the scene for the growing all-black unity which characterised the rousing mass struggles from the early 50's onwards.

In programmatic form, all these advances had the fullest expression at the 1969 Morogoro Conference which adopted the ANC's Strategy and Tactics — a document which goes further than any other mass national movement has gone in the linking of social and national liberation and in highlighting the dominant role of the black working people in the struggle for national liberation.

It was natural that, despite earlier contradictions and confrontations, the maturing of the ideological content of both the national and working class movements (a process which has its basic roots in changing socio-economic conditions which cannot be elaborated here) should have resulted in a growing collaboration between them; a collaboration which, amongst other things, led to the 1961 joint decision by the Party and the ANC to create Umkhonto We Sizwe, the armed wing of the liberation movement. Today the ANC and the SACP are embraced in the common front of liberation. In the words of the ANC spokesman at the 1969 joint meeting of representatives of the two leaderships, these organisations constitute "the two leading pillars of our struggle"

Unity Grows

The evolution of this collaboration has a history of its own which cannot be dealt with in any detail here. But a few general observations are in order. As was emphasised in the 1970 report to the augmented meeting of our Central Committee, the relationship could not be described in the form of any rigid constitutional formula or structure. Externally, until 1969, it did not even express itself in joint meetings and formal agreements. What made this collaboration of the special type possible, especially in the post-Rivonia period?

In the first place, by then no significant differences existed between the two organisations on the immediate content, strategy and tactics of the South African revolution. This was in a large measure the result of the loyal devotion and hard work of so many communists who were also members of the national organisations. None of them hid their identities either as communists or as ANC cadres. Those who functioned at both levels were not doing so to "capture" either organisation for the other, but to achieve a maximum political impact for our common immediate aims. The views, mood and argument of ANC leaders influenced the form-

ulation of Party policy, and the process also worked the other way about.

At the 1969 Joint Meeting the main Party spokesman, referring to the 1961 decision of both leaderships at home to chart the new way of armed struggle, said:

"In this historic step — as in many others — we have worked together as intimates, as brothers and as equals. This is not surprising for nothing separates us from the immediate and foremost tasks — the destruction of white domination and the winning of the national democratic revolution whose main content is the liberation of the African people. . .

"Only the vulgar or those who wish to make mischief see in our collaboration a white-anting process. They cannot understand how two political parties can work so closely together without stabbing each other in the back. Above all they cannot grasp — as I think we all do — that if either organisation were to disappear or be weakened, the struggle would be all the poorer for it.

"Why so? It is because the national struggle in our conditions cries out for the organised participation of the working class and its class political organ — the Party. And equally, the struggle for socialism cries out for a vigorous and strong national movement of the African people which heads the liberation front. . .

"Experience has proved over and over again that in our revolution, collaboration between our two bodies has raised the level of the struggle and has been a mutually reinforcing influence. Both organisations are necessary and both serve the struggle otherwise neither should be perpetuated for the sake of mere tradition or emotion".

These sentiments remain as valid today as they have ever been. Yet, the very fact that our country can boast of "two leading pillars of our struggle" which have so little which separates them in relation to the immediate strategy and tactics of the South African Revolution, continues to arouse discussion on their respective roles both as independent organs and as part of the liberation alliance.

Amongst the questions which merit discussion are: How does the Party exercise its role as the vanguard of the working class in a situation in which it has accepted the leading role of the ANC in the liberation front? Given that every revolution has its own strategic and tactical stages, how do we view the present connection between the struggle for liberation and for socialism? What, in other words, is the relationship between the national and class struggle in present conditions? What role can the Party play in safeguarding the ideology of our revolution and protecting it against petty-bourgeois and backward nationalist tendencies?

General Approach of SACP

Before posing the questions in more detail, it is essential that they be situated in the Party's overall approach to the relationship between the present phase of our revolutionary process and the perspective of a socialist South Africa. This approach can be summarised as follows:

a) The *strategic aim* of our Party is to destroy the system of capitalist exploitation in South Africa and to replace it with a Socialist system in which the ownership of the means of production will be socialised and the whole economy organised to serve the interests of all the people. Such a society can only be achieved if political power is placed firmly in the hands of the working class in town and countryside in alliance with the poor peasantry.

b) The *immediate aim* of the Party is to win the objectives of the National Democratic Revolution, more particularly to win national liberation for all the black oppressed and to destroy the economic and political power of the existing ruling class. At the same time it is the duty of our Party to spread its ideology of Marxism-Leninism, to underline unceasingly the connection between true national liberation and the building of a socialist society, to organise the working class to play a leading role in the National Democratic Revolution, and to attract the most advanced elements, especially from the working class, to the ranks of the Party.

c) The achievement of the aims of the National Democratic Revolution demands a broad alliance of all classes and strata, especially amongst the racially oppressed, who can be mobilised in support of these aims. Although all classes amongst the black oppressed have an interest in ending national oppression, they do not share the same goals of the fundamental social transformation of a liberated South Africa. The inevitable victory of the national liberation movement can only be truly meaningful and guaranteed if the capitalist system of exploitation, which is the true foundation and purpose of racist oppression, is destroyed. For this reason the Party believes that within the broad alliance for national liberation the working class must be the leading revolutionary force. *This means that the Party, together with other forward looking forces, must ensure that the end result of the present phase of our struggle is the winning of People's Power and the creation of a state in which the working class in town and countryside in alliance with the poor peasants will be the leading force.*

d) In organisational terms the Liberation Alliance is expressed through the liberation front headed by the African National Congress. The ANC is

a broad mass national movement which attracts to its ranks all Africans and other revolutionaries, whatever their class origins, who accept the programme and are prepared to fight against the racist regime by all means, including armed struggle. The Strategy and Tactics of the ANC also assigns a special role to the working people in the national struggle. But the ANC correctly continues to retain its character as a broad national movement which has room in it for cadres with differing ideological beliefs.

The above is only a very general summary of the Party's ideological perspectives which are spelt out in greater detail in the Programme and many other basic documents, a selection of which is contained in the book "SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNISTS SPEAK 1915-1980" published on the occasion of the 60th Anniversary.

Against the background of these perspectives and the changing conditions of struggle, we can proceed to reflect on the questions raised above.

The Vanguard role of the Party

Marxism-Leninism teaches that the Party of the working class has the leading role in the struggle for the elimination of the exploitation of man by man and the building of a socialist society which will eventually be transformed into a communist society. Of all classes in our society, it is the proletariat which has nothing to lose and everything to gain by the destruction of the system of capitalist exploitation. In addition, the role which the proletariat plays in the relations of production makes it best suited politically and organisationally to carry out this historic mission. It can only carry out this mission if it is organised and guided by its political vanguard — the Communist Party.

But a party does not earn the title of vanguard of the working class merely by proclaiming it. Guided by a correct application of Marxism-Leninism it achieves this position by the degree to which it organises the class which it represents, the calibre of its day-to-day leadership, and its devotion to the revolutionary cause. The need to give correct guidance to the revolutionary cause does not imply that the party must insist on projecting itself as the public "leader" of every step in the unfolding of the conflict.

We must not confuse form with substance. We must be on our guard not to mix up the role of the Party as the vanguard of the working class and its role as a representative of this class in specific alliances of class forces which

are required at various stages of the struggle. The question of whether it is correct for the Party to strive to place itself exclusively at the head of the different stages of the revolutionary upsurge depends upon the conditions of a particular struggle at each of these stages and the precise role of the class which it represents. In specific conditions, to attempt to do so may not advance but rather retard the Party's true exercise of its role as a vanguard of the working class. This most advanced class of our epoch can rarely, if ever, bring about a revolutionary transformation on its own. It works at all times with social forces.

Both the Party's Programme and the ANC's Strategy and Tactics accept that, within the alliance of class forces which is demanded by the present stage of our revolution, the workers have a special place as the most consistently revolutionary force. But this is not the same as saying that the working class through its political vanguard must demand a monopoly of control of the revolutionary alliance or organisational supremacy in the decision-making bodies which make up the alliance.

In the case of our situation the problem can be posed in another way: Are we doing violence to the vanguard principle when we talk in our Programme of the ANC leading the liberation alliance? Is not this formulation inconsistent with the formulation in the very same Programme that "the central and immediate task of the Communist Party is to lead the fight for the national liberation of the non-white people and for the victory of the democratic revolution"?

Not at all! If correct leadership of the democratic revolution requires the strengthening of the national movement as the major mass organisational force, then this is precisely the way in which a party exercises its leading and vanguard role in the real (and not vulgar) sense of the term. This is the way in which Vietnamese Communists exercised their vanguard role in relation to the FLN during the liberation struggle, and it is also the way in which the early Cuban Communists related to Fidel Castro's July the 26th Movement. As long as the party does not lose its independence and its separate identity as a political vanguard of the working class, its projection of the ANC as the body leading the alliance of class forces in our struggle is in no way inconsistent with the Party's role as a vanguard organisation of the working class.

To maintain the Party's independence means that it must be seen, especially by the working people, to be acting as an effective advance guard which is visibly a part of them. Of course, one of its primary tasks is to spread the ideas of Marxism-Leninism and, more particularly, an

understanding of the relationship of the national struggle and the struggle for socialism. But we would cease to be a Party in the real meaning of the term if we restricted ourselves to general education about some future millenium. It is our duty to engage in public activities in the Party's name on issues affecting the people, and especially the working class, in their daily lives. This in no way undermines the ANC's role as the accepted public head and key spokesman on behalf of the liberation front. The Party's public interventions are not competitive but reinforce the common approach of the alliance.

In any case, the Party's mobilising propaganda will have a special content which the ANC's intervention should not and cannot have. There is no daily problem facing the working people, whether in town or countryside, which cannot be linked to the ravages of capitalism; and it is only our Party which can present this connection in an undiluted way. This is not to deny that there are certain areas of national campaigning which can more appropriately be initiated and pursued by the ANC as the head of the Liberation Alliance. But even here, supporting activity by the other independent sectors of the Alliance — whether it be the South African Congress of Trade Unions or the Party — is not out of place.

The Stages of our Revolution

The 1962 Programme of the SACP states that "the *immediate* and imperative interests of all sections of the South African people demand the carrying out of a . . . National Democratic Revolution which will overthrow the colonialist state of white supremacy and establish an independent state of national democracy in South Africa. . . The main content of this revolution is the national liberation of the African people". The Party sees the achievement of these democratic aims as laying "the indispensable basis for the advance of our country. . . to a socialist and communist future".

There are two ways of reading these formulations and the distinction between them has a crucial bearing on the role of a party of the working class and its relationship to the national movement.

The one interpretation would argue that the South African revolution can be divided into two distinct and compartmentalised stages; the aims of the first stage are to create a kind of non-racist bourgeois democracy, and it is only when this is achieved that the movement will turn its thought to the struggle for a socialist order, i.e. to the second stage of the revolution. It is this dualistic approach which has been attributed to the Party by a

number of left-wing critics who allege that it has thereby abandoned its role as the working class vanguard and has moved away from the politics of class struggle in favour of a form of so-called bourgeois nationalism. If this interpretation is correct, it would indeed put in doubt the very need for a separate working class party at this *stage*; at best, such a party would have to maintain itself in a sort of cocoon ready to emerge when the struggle for socialism is on the agenda.

There may have been moments in the life of the Party and the occasional loose formulation which suggest a lack of precision in the understanding of the relationship between the struggle for national and social emancipation. But reading the Programme as a whole and examining the way it has been applied in the revolutionary practices of the Party, there can be no doubt that this portrayal of the Party's perspectives is a distortion of its true position.

As outlined earlier, the Party has, in the process of time, moved away from the approach contained in its first Manifesto in which the national factor is so completely underplayed that it resulted in a virtual dismissal of any significant role for a mass national movement in the unfolding of our revolution. But this extreme of a one-stage revolution based on the slogan of "class against class" has not been replaced by the opposite, equally mechanical, extreme of two distinct stages which are totally sealed off from one another.

What is meant by "Stages"?

Our formulations do, of course, refer to "stages of the struggle", "stages of the revolution", etc. What do these phases signify? They signify what every revolutionary practitioner experiences, which is that every political struggle has specific phases and stages which determine the application of strategy and tactics at any given moment of time. But there is no Chinese Wall between these stages; they flow from and into one another, and the dominant ingredients of later stages must already have begun to mature within the womb of the earlier stage. This is what Marxist dialectics teach us.

Our revolution is one continuing process. Its immediate emphasis and the chief mobilising factor is black liberation. But this immediate objective has strategic relevance in the struggle for social as well as national emancipation. The ANC's Strategy and Tactics correctly states that the national character of the immediate struggle must dominate its approach. But it goes on to say that:

"It is a national struggle which is taking place in a different era and in a different context from those which characterised the early struggles against colonialism. . . in a world in which the horizons liberated from foreign oppression extend beyond mere formal political control and encompass the elements which make such control meaningful – economic emancipation. It is also happening in a new kind of South Africa; in which there is a large and well-developed working class whose consciousness and independent expressions of the working people – their political organs and trade unions – are very much part of the liberation front. Thus our nationalism must not be confused with the chauvinism or narrow nationalism of a previous epoch. It must not be confused with the classical drive by an elitist group among the oppressed people to gain ascendancy so that they can replace the oppressor in the exploitation of the mass. . ."

Some commentators have described the immediate emphasis on the black liberation in our revolution as a bourgeois-democratic deviation which encourages the working class party to drag at the tail of the national movement. In its classical meaning the term "bourgeois-democratic" suggests a struggle which is led by the bourgeoisie and is primarily in their class interest, but in which the working people also have a stake since it introduces a degree of political "freedom" and destroys feudal and other pre-capitalist modes of production. There is thus the tendency to indiscriminately characterise all struggles which concentrate on democracy and against national oppression as essentially bourgeois-democratic.

The term "bourgeois-democratic" in the context of our own struggle to achieve the aims of the national democratic revolution is misleading and there is good reason why it does not appear in the Party's Programme. But if we do choose to use it merely to describe the immediate concentration on the struggle for democratic aims, then we would do well to remember Lenin's words that, even in a bourgeois revolution, the bourgeoisie is not necessarily the "chief factor" (*Agrarian Programme of the R.S.D.P.*, page 125) and, even more in point in relation to our present discussion:

"We all counterpose bourgeois revolution and socialist revolution; we all insist on the absolute necessity of strictly distinguishing between them; however, can it be denied that in the course of history individual particular elements of the two revolutions become interwoven?"

(*Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*, page 82)

The Continuing Revolution

Lenin was describing a situation in pre-October Russia in which the liberal bourgeoisie constituted an important sector of the struggle against the Tsarist autocracy. In this day of our struggle in South Africa it would be wrong to attribute this role to our Oppenheimers and others who form a vital bastion of the very racist autocracy. But the relevance of Lenin's remarks to our discussion remains of great force in other respects. For, nowhere more than in South Africa is the struggle for political democracy and against national domination so interwoven with the struggle for eventual social emancipation. As stated by Zanzolo (*The African Communist* First Quarter 1963 page 22), "under South African conditions the national democratic revolution has great prospects of proceeding at once to socialist solutions". The reasons for this assertion are spelt out by Slovo (*South Africa — No Middle Road*, page 140):

"... No significant national demand can be successfully won without the destruction of the existing capitalist structure. It is precisely because in South Africa capitalist production relations are the foundation of national repression that the national struggle itself has an objective coincidence with the elimination of all forms of exploitation.

"The elimination of national inequality, if it is to be more than a mere gesture, involves a *complete* change of the way in which the country's wealth is appropriated. . . . If every racist statute were to be repealed tomorrow, leaving the economic status quo undisturbed, white domination in its most essential aspect would remain. National liberation, in its true sense, must therefore imply the expropriation of the owners of the means of production (monopolised by a bourgeoisie drawn from the white group) and the complete destruction of the state which serves them. There can be no halfway house unless the national struggle is stopped in its tracks and is satisfied with the cooption of a small black elite into the presently forbidden areas of economic and political power."

This assertion of what true liberation in our country means does not, of course, imply that the revolution will inevitably move in the direction indicated. It merely suggests that there is an objective basis for such an outcome. Whether or not it happens in practice depends on many other considerations, the most important of which is the role played by the working class in the alliance of class forces during the first stage of the continuing revolution.

The high level of capitalist development in South Africa has given birth to a distinctive form of class stratification not only in the enemy camp but also amongst the black oppressed. The economic foundations for the emergence of petty-bourgeois nationalism are already solid and are being made more so as the enemy proceeds with its deliberate policy of

stimulating the creation of the bigger black middle strata with a stake in the periphery of the capitalist system. The political representatives of such tendencies have, in the past, included such groups as the PAC, the "Group of 8", sections of the "Black Consciousness Movement", some Bantustan leaders, etc. And, as the national liberation struggle approaches its climax, we must expect a stronger urge from the non-working class black forces to stop the revolution in its tracks and to opt for a bourgeois solution.

The historically-evolved revolutionary nationalism of the ANC is, of course, a major obstacle to the ascendancy of such tendencies. Particularly in recent years the ANC has demonstrated its capacity to combat them within its ranks. The Party as an independent force, and individual Communists who also became leaders of the ANC, have undoubtedly contributed to this process. Today the ANC's Strategy and Tactics talks of "economic emancipation" as a key element in its understanding of what true national liberation means; of a "speedy progression from formal liberation to genuine and lasting emancipation"; of a perspective which "is made more real by the existence in our country of a large and growing working class whose militancy and political consciousness as a revolutionary class constitutes a distinct and reinforcing layer of our liberation".

It is this narrowing of the ideological gap between the ANC and the SACP in relation to the immediate perspective of our revolution which arouses discussion on the respective roles of both organisations in the area of public mobilisation. But the fact that the ANC has recognised the primary role of the working class in the coming social conflicts does not mean that it is, or should become, a vanguard party of the working class.

Distinct and Complementary Roles

The ANC remains a mass national movement. It is not an organisation which is guided by, and propagates, the integrated ideology of Marxism-Leninism. It correctly welcomes within its ranks all liberation fighters, whatever their class affiliation, who support its revolutionary nationalism. Whilst its policy for the future, as set out in the Freedom Charter, is not inconsistent with an advance towards socialism in the post-liberation period, the ANC does not and should not demand a commitment to a socialist South Africa as a pre-condition of membership. It must clearly retain its character as the mass organisational instrument of all social

forces who can be won over to fight "the first battle".

Conversely, the Party is not a mass movement; it represents the aspirations of a single class — the proletariat. This class not only participates in the struggle as part of the alliance which is represented by the national movement, but also fights as an independent class contingent with aims which are not in conflict with the democratic revolution but go beyond it. As part of the alliance it cannot demand that all other classes amongst the black oppressed submit to its Marxist-Leninist ideology and its organisational hegemony.

At the same time the Party must guard its character as an independent vanguard of the proletariat and lead it in its class battles. *But we must remember a fact which is often overlooked by purely academic analysts: In South African conditions it is false to counterpose the national and class struggle as if they are two separate forms of struggle. In a situation in which the main immediate interests of the proletariat are served by an assault on racist autocracy, its participation in the fight for national liberation is precisely one of the key ways in which it engages in class struggle.*

There is thus, at one and the same time, a complementary and distinct role in our revolution for the two pillars of the contemporary struggle — the ANC and the SACP. This role, as we have tried to show, is rooted not only in our specific history, but also reflects the relatively advanced state of class stratification of both black and white.

What of the future? It is perhaps unwise to speculate about the emergence of a single organisation out of the various strands of the liberation front which will guide the continuing revolutionary process at a stage when the first objectives of the national liberation struggle have been achieved. However, it may be that, by then, the tasks of the continuing revolution will, as in Cuba, demand a unified political force which will consolidate the national liberation victory and create conditions for the building of socialism. Whether this happens or not will depend upon the role which is played by the working class in the immediate build-up towards such a victory; a victory in which we must ensure that the working class in alliance with the poor peasants emerges as the leading force.

(The subject of this article is under continuous discussion in the South African liberation movement. Further contributions to the debate are invited from members of the ANC, SACP and other fraternal organisations. — Ed.)