

IS THE TABLE READY?



Serious South African revolutionaries are not opposed to negotiating with the enemy.

They know that the struggle for freedom cannot be conducted in a pure way. They must be ready to use as many weapons as is necessary and be prepared to change from one form of struggle to another or change the emphasis in strategy and tactics.



There is growing pressure by international agencies and foreign governments for a negotiated settlement in South Africa. The African National Congress and the liberation alliance it leads has responded by presenting its proposals to the OAU and the Non-Aligned Movement. The proposals have been endorsed.

The Liberation Alliance is mindful that we are dealing with a treacherous enemy and its imperialist allies. Accordingly, we demand that the regime proves its good faith.

It must take measures to:

- Release all political prisoners unconditionally.
- Unban the ANC, SACP and other organisations.
- End the State of Emergency and repeal all laws which prevent political activity.
- Halt all political trials and executions.
- Remove the troops from the townships.

The proposals of the ANC say that 'these measures are necessary to ensure that the people themselves participate in the process of remaking their country'. We will not allow negotiations to take place above the heads of the masses.

The process of negotiations must involve the masses to ensure that power is indeed transferred to the people. The liberation Alliance has made significant advances in utilising negotiations as a site of struggle within the terrain of political mass work:

- Firstly, there has been, within the present limita-

tions, a democratic process of discussion leading up to the negotiation proposals. The organisations and leaders are united on this question.

- Secondly, we have occupied the high ground and the enemy has to respond to us. He has rejected our proposals and is so far unable to offer any meaningful alternative.
- Thirdly, as a consequence of numerous contacts with interest groups, there is a small but growing body of people within the white community that supports and agitates for a negotiated solution.
- Fourthly, many Western governments have come out in support of our proposals.

In response to the mounting pressure (internally and externally) the regime has released Comrade Walter Sisulu and his colleagues. It is an important move and we welcome it. However, it does not go far enough. Indeed, the release is significant in that it clearly reveals that the regime will give as little as possible and will try to keep as much as it can for itself, preserving its control and privileges.

What Role Should Negotiations Play in our Strategy and Tactics?

Armed struggle cannot be counterposed with dialogue, negotiations and justifiable compromise, as if they were mutually exclusive categories. Whether there is an armed seizure of power or negotiated settlement, what is indisputable to both is the development of the political and military forces of the struggle.

We are not engaged in a struggle whose objective is merely to generate sufficient pressure to bring the other side to the negotiation table. Our sights must be clearly set on the perspectives of a seizure of power. If negotiations become a reality, then we will take it in our stride.

In the complex relationship of negotiation as a site of struggle and the main thrust of our strategy and tactics, we must place the correct emphasis. An over-emphasis on negotiation presently will have the effect of diverting and demoralising our people. A weakened liberation movement and a demobilised people will not gain power. It does not matter how articulate or brilliant their negotiators are, power cannot be won at the negotiation table alone.

Indeed, as our Party Programme emphasises, the path to power lies with the masses in struggle.