

POPULAR LEGALITY AND THE UNDERGROUND



The masses of our country have been steadily imposing their own popular legality on the ANC and the SACP. Now in the last two months this process of popular legalisation has been carried forward on a scale never before seen.

A few years ago someone was sentenced to a long prison sentence for having *Viva ANC* scratched on a tin mug. Now the time of popular legalisation of our liberation movement has grown so irresistible Vlok himself is forced to say in parliament: *'It is not against the law to display ANC flags in public'*. He must be choking on those words!

Our released leaders, Sisulu and Kathrada, Mbeki, Gwala and their colleagues speak openly and defiantly as ANC and, in some cases, as SACP members and leaders.



All of these developments raise important strategic and organisational questions. Should ANC and SACP machineries now surface from the underground? If not, what is the relationship between the underground machineries and the released internal ANC leadership core? Should existing MDM structures which stand four-square behind the ANC dissolve themselves into an above-board ANC? These and many more questions are on many lips.

It is important these questions are raised. It is important that, at the organisational level, we are prepared to adapt ourselves creatively and boldly to a rapidly-changing situation. But at the same time we must guard against hasty, ill-considered moves.

While debate and discussion must continue in an ongoing way, let us attempt to give answers for the present to some of these questions.



- It would be a grave error on the part of the ANC and SACP for our underground machineries to surface. The enemy has been forced to concede space, but our organisations remain legally banned. The present relative loosening up on repression by the regime is a tactic imposed upon them by internal and international factors. The regime still has the physical capacity to unleash a massive reign of terror against our forces. It might have to pay a high political price in doing this, but it has definitely not abandoned all thought of this option.
- We must use the present period to build and consolidate organisation at all levels — including the underground level. We need a tried and tested underground machinery beyond the reach of enemy repression, not only to prosecute our armed struggle, but in order to provide effective, day-to-day vanguard political guidance to our people.
- This does not mean that we relax in any way our efforts to impose ever greater popular legality on the ANC and SACP. We must keep widening the space we have opened up. We must make this popular legality irreversible.
- At present, inside our country, the ANC is two complementary things. It is a broad national liberation movement with millions of active followers and supporters among the MDM. At the same time, organisationally, it operates as a national democratic vanguard force with a disciplined, centrally-commanded cadreship.



Some of this internal cadreship, specifically the released national leadership, will now no longer be underground and anonymous. They have a major role to play in the ongoing, popular legalisation of the ANC and the Party. But it would be wrong at this point in time to dissolve MDM structures into an above-board ANC.

ANC and MDM structures have, for the moment, distinct but related tasks at home. The ANC's task is to provide overall revolutionary political leadership. The task of the MDM is to mobilise and organise the largest number of oppressed and democratic South Africans — as workers, youth, women etc — on a sectoral basis.

