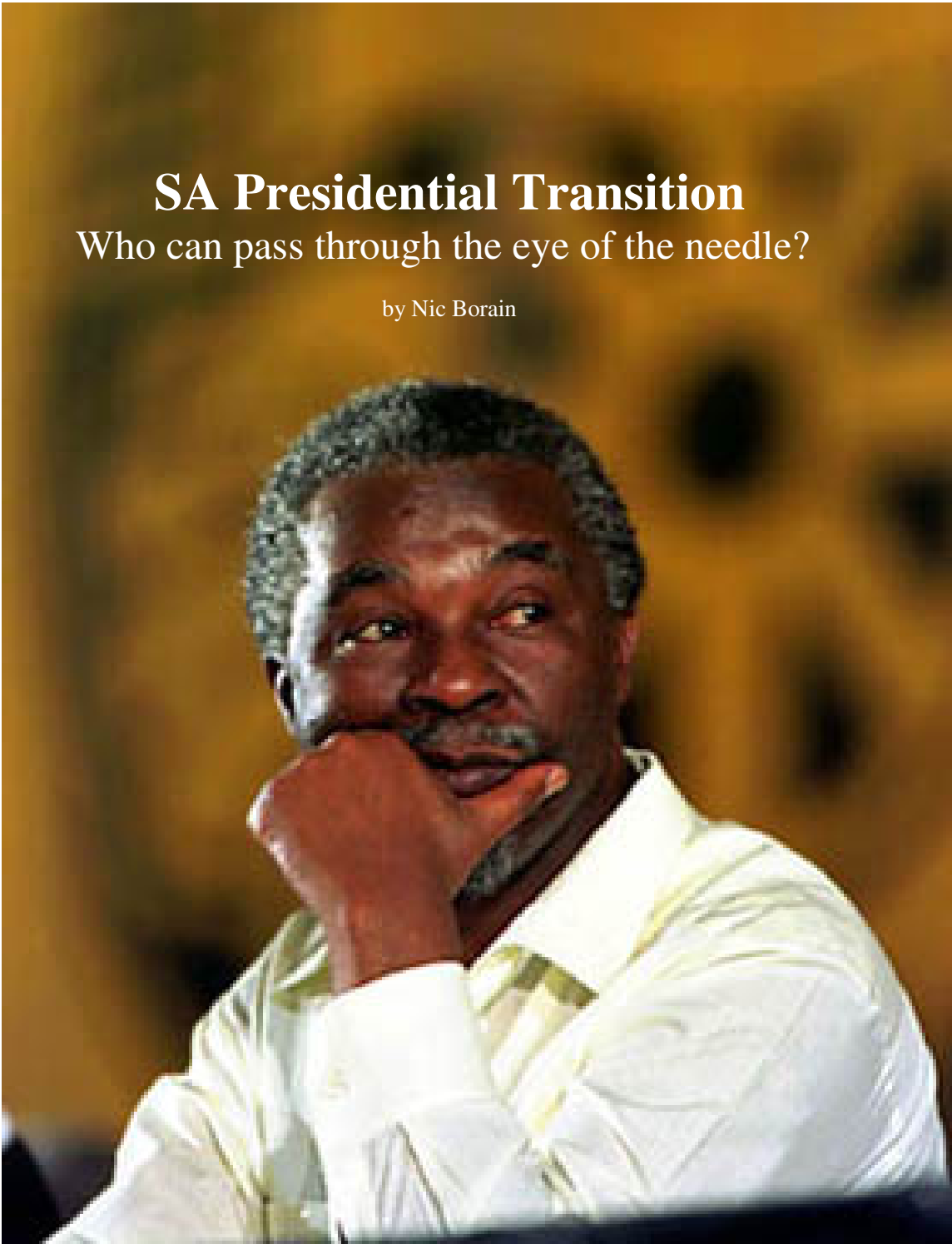


SA Presidential Transition

Who can pass through the eye of the needle?

by Nic Borain



Writer's Note

I am an independent political analyst focussing on Southern Africa, particularly South Africa. I specialise in examining political and policy risks for financial markets. This document was written in the first quarter of 2007 and has the limited objective of describing the various issues or questions that will need to be examined if we are to achieve a robust understanding of the African National Congress' succession process. I attempt to pose questions as varied as why the succession contest has become a media and national obsession, why it seems to be accompanied by such anxiety and how important is it, really? I examine the constitution and accumulated experience of the ANC, the process that the organisation is required to undergo in electing its leadership and amending its policies. I make the obvious points that leadership contests in (generally stable) political parties usually involve clashes of different interests which are often negotiated through horse-trading behind closed doors. I attempt to show how and why the contest has bled, at some cost, across important boundaries in the country's system of government and administration. I also spend some time tracing key aspects of the main ideological debates in the Ruling Alliance and show how this vigorous debate and the succession contest have, in part, collapsed into each other. Then I engage in an exercise of speculation about the outcome of the contest and examine some selected candidates who might succeed to the presidency of South Africa in 2009.

My intention was narrowly to collate the known or assumed facts as a guide for anyone who wishes to follow the process – although I do venture opinions on several topics. These opinions are my own and in no way reflect the opinions of any organisation or publication that I may consult to or write for.

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Nic Borain
0834609906
nabor@telkomsa.net
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Contents

1. Executive summary
2. Introduction
3. Why the nerves about SA Presidential Succession?
 - 3.1 Into the unknown
 - Anxieties about new leadership
 - Anxieties from unravelling global certainties, environmental threats and shifting policy parameters
 - 3.2 Corruption and misuse and damaging of state resources and institutions
 - 3.3 Zuma – left backing and populist leanings
 - 3.4 Zuma – character
4. Alliance struggles over power, ideology and policy
 - 4.1 Ideological contest
 - Power and its corruptions
5. Leadership criteria, technicalities of ANC voting and shifting balance of forces in ANC regions and affiliate organisations
 - 5.1 Through the Eye of the Needle
 - 5.2 ANC traditions
 - 5.3 ANC constitution - conferences, branches, alliance partners ANC formations
 - 5.4 The real situation
 - Eastern Cape
 - KwaZulu Natal
 - Gauteng and the rest
 - ANC's Women League and Youth League and Provincial Executive Committee
6. The Candidates waiting in the wings
 - 6.1 The generic good candidate
 - 6.2 Phumzile Mlambo Ngcuka
 - 6.3 Jacob Zuma
 - 6.4 Cyril Rampahosa
 - 6.5 Tokyo Sexwale
 - 6.6 Joel Netshitenzhe
 - 6.7 Saki Macozoma
 - 6.8 Kgalema Motlanthe
 - 6.9 Trevor Manuel
 - 6.10 Mbasima Shilowa
 - 6.11 Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma
 - 6.12 Tito Mboweni
 - 6.13 Mosiuoa "Terror" Lekota

1. Executive summary

2007 is a crossroads year for the African National Congress and South Africa.

The up and coming ANC leadership is not well known outside of South Africa, a country which is still, objectively, a young democracy with untested institutions and severe social imbalances.

New and untested leadership of the ruling party and the country will enter the stage of history in a context of unexpected and growing global uncertainty. The inherently unsettling nature of the domestic political succession is amplified as an apparently natural and stable global order has revealed itself to be increasingly tricky, unstable and unpredictable.

The ending of the Cold War did not end history and the US did not come to represent a unipolarity around which democracy and stability could spread. Instead, the Washington Consensus has crumbled and the rise of China, Russia and India is in the process of rewriting the rules of global trade, economic governance and the structure of capital markets. The world's major economic and military power extends itself and commits ever more of its myriad apparatuses, fashioned to achieve its national goals, to perplexing military campaigns. And while the cat's away: the emerging world is experimenting with different forms of governance, including economic governance, that would have been unthinkable only ten years ago.

In this context a bitter contest has arisen within the ruling party (as well as within and between the ANC's partners in the Ruling Alliance – the South African Communist Party {SACP} and the Congress of South African Trade Unions {Cosatu}). In general terms this contest presents itself in a traditional Socialism versus Capitalism struggle, but the issues are more nuanced and explored in greater depth in the text and in its addenda. The importance of this ideological contest is that it has become inextricably intertwined with the succession debate.

If this was not enough, for reasons that will be explained in the text, the succession debate has become loaded with the perception that it is something of an informal poll on how seriously the country is prepared to deal with corruption.

South Africa's ruling ANC has a major policy conference in June and its 53rd National Conference in December. It has become conventional wisdom that this conference will elect a new ANC president who will go on to become president of the country in 2009. We think another scenario is possible; namely that Thabo Mbeki stands against Jacob Zuma (or another candidate) for the ANC presidency in December either postponing the choice of country president in 2009 (if Mbeki wins) or decisively resolving the question (if Zuma wins).

The ANC constitution specifies precisely how the leadership is elected at the National Conference. We describe this process, but make the point that parallel and informal power-plays are as likely to determine the outcome of the 2007 National Conference as the constitutionally specified processes of the ANC.

We do think that a decisive victory, one way or the other, will determine the future of a number of supply-side reforms (most importantly those relating to the structure of the labour market) designed to lower the crippling unemployment rate.

It's foolish to predict such a close run race so long in advance, but our first case scenario is one in which Zuma fails to become president of the ANC in 2007. If this is the case, the 2009 successor to Mbeki will not be known until the ANC goes through a specific nomination and election process for this position – probably starting in 2008. We examine as many potential presidential candidates as possible who might be nominated and elected through this process.

2. Introduction

The question of who will succeed Thabo Mbeki as president of South Africa has disproportionately occupied market, and other, commentators even well before the Jacob Zuma challenge built up momentum in 2005. At first glance it seems both iniquitous and inequitable that South Africa, to avoid perceptions of increased political risk, should be required to settle its succession plans almost five years in advance of the actual handover in 2009. However, at second – and subsequent – glances the concern and interest appear less unreasonable.

Post-1994 South Africa has been something of a puzzle for those who expected – perhaps hoped – that the end of Apartheid would be a process of cataclysmic redress; a grand settling of the score of historical injustice. It's impossible to tell if history settles scores; the game goes on forever and no-one knows, let alone gets, what they deserve. But there has been a niggling concern that 1994 left a large majority of black South African's with disappointed expectations and a growing anger that would inevitably lead to a second, more decisive transformation, a radical discontinuity with unknowable but probably extremely negative outcomes for investors.

The calm certainty of Nelson Mandela and the technical expertise of Thabo Mbeki (and the gravitas, barring a few eccentricities, of both) corralled and diminished that global scepticism. No small part of this resulted from the fact that both men lead political strategies of pragmatic idealism, always and ultimately prioritising containing and ultimately solving the destabilising crises of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

All change is unsettling, but a South Africa without these illustrious, high-minded leaders of global eminence and distinction might feel less of a sure thing and the fears that waned from 1994 may wax again with their departure and replacement by people's whose names cannot be pronounced in London and New York.

The uncertainty in the South African case is elevated because of the intensity of the succession contest. On the face of it the struggle appears to be between Thabo Mbeki's desire to control the process as well as its outcome and Jacob Zuma's challenge for the top job. This contest has bled across important boundaries and has become confused with or a proxy for:

- policy debates within the ruling alliance, especially those that might affect the stability and predictability of macro-economic policy;
- the campaign against corruption;
- the functioning of various organs of state, especially the National Prosecuting Authority and the National Intelligence Agency;

This document will examine:

- why and to what degree the succession contest is important;
- the political risks for financial markets associated with the contest;
- the intertwined debate/contest over the macro-economic reform programme;

- some aspects of the global context in which these debates are taking place and being influenced by;
- the technical and practical aspects of the intertwined succession processes in the ANC and government;
- a brief profile of some of the most likely candidates to succeed Mbeki;

3. Why the nerves about SA Presidential Succession?

3.1 Into the unknown

Anxieties about new leadership

Initial perceptions of new leaders tend to be cautious or even suspicious. Barring wildly unpopular policy departures and/or military adventures or unseemly personal behaviour, initial anxiety usually settles into comfortable familiarity.

In the South African case, however, the anxiety about change of political and other leadership is likely to be elevated because the democracy is young and therefore the long-term stability of its institutions and of the law is untested.

Additionally, this country has developed a habit, possibly a mythology, of what I term “leadership exceptionalism”. In short this refers to the belief, erroneous or otherwise, that South Africa has achieved an unlikely stability primarily through the exceptional quality of leaders throughout the society – including on both sides of the Apartheid fence and in the churches, trade unions and business.¹ This applies especially (for our purposes here) to the post-Apartheid political leadership of Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki. Thus, if this contention is true, the next generation of leaders is perceived to be unknown, untried and untested – adding to the anxiety about transition.

Anxieties from unravelling global certainties, environmental threats and shifting policy parameters

Eighteen years ago Francis Fukuyama wrote in arguably one of the most premature and inopportune essays of the 20th Century:

"What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government." (quoted from "The End of History?", 1989)

Eighteen years later, after the resolution of the Cold War and with the brief economic and political consensuses that followed receding behind us, the human world looks full of “history” i.e., change and contest, war and strife and the endless manoeuvring for advantage by classes, groups and countries.

¹ Nelson Mandela and Frederik Willem de Klerk sharing the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993 bolster’s the “leadership exceptionalism” contention but does not offer proof one way or another that South Africa has, actually, been uniquely blessed with exceptional leadership

Some of the features of the ideological, environmental, political and economic contradictions that make today's world feel uncertain, unsettling and unpredictable for some include:

- The rise of very different systems of governance and economics in China, as well as India - and the political re-emergence of Russia – with attendant growing multipolarity (as opposed to the unipolar world with the US as the only superpower) as well as an uncertain global balance of forces and uncertain role and status of institutions like the IMF and the World Bank;
- The global scramble for resources set off by rapid Chinese economic growth – especially for oil and other fossil fuels and the realisation that, no matter how large the deposits, their inevitable depletion is in sight;
- The rise of political Islam and the growth and prominence of the Islamic world in general;
- The over-extension of the USA in the Middle East and Afghanistan and the linked rise of Iran as a competing hegemonic power in the Middle East as well as the emergence and growth of global Jihadism in the form of networks like Al-Qaeda;
- The re-emergence of a plethora of state directed developmental paths, many of them drawing from socialist ideas. The most notable examples are in Latin America but South Africa's own experiment with the “activist developmental state” is all part of searching for new paths to development beyond the Washington Consensus.².
- The profound consequences of global warming and projected shortages of fresh water by the middle of this century.

Thus, anxiety about the South African political transition is significantly heightened (compared even to the de Klerk - Mandela – Mbeki successions); because a host of new global uncertainties beset institutions of government, financial markets and ordinary people.

3.2 Corruption and misuse and damaging of state resources and institutions

True or false and for better or for worse;

- the allegations of corruption against Jacob Zuma
- the multiple and uncontested economic transactions and favours that passed between the ANC Deputy President and Shabir Shaik – now convicted of two counts of corruption and one of fraud
- the widespread, but entirely untested, charge that President Mbeki has allowed the courts and prosecution authority to be used less to stop Zuma's alleged corruption and more to prevent him ascending to the presidency in 2009,

² Economist, John William's term to describe a set of measures he and the IMF and World Bank thought were needed if Latin America – and later Africa – were to pull themselves from the mire. The measures included tax reform to lower marginal rates and broaden the base, interest rate liberalisation, a competitive exchange rate, trade liberalisation, liberalisation of FDI flows, privatisation, and deregulation of barriers to entry and exit and the securing of property rights. These measures became known by critics as “neo-liberalism” or “market fundamentalism” (much to William's chagrin).

has stamped the succession process with the twin burdens of being a proxy for the fight against corruption and being tainted by the alleged misuse of state resources by the highest power in the land.

In the process the fight against corruption has been discredited in some sectors of the population because it is seen to have been used as a weapon to deploy against political opponents, instead of what it is, namely one of the most urgent tasks of the South African democracy. The judiciary has at various times been seen to be partisan, although it is temporarily redeemed in the eyes of militant Zuma supporters for striking the corruption case against their champion from the roll. It is an important unfathomable whether his supporters would accept a guilty verdict if or when the prosecution charges Zuma again and if or when he was found guilty.

The National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) and the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) have suffered real damage as a result of the succession contest playing itself out in these institutions, leading to extensive public attacks on the NPA and the firing of senior leaders of the NIA as well as various legal proceedings stemming from this.

3.3 Zuma – Left backing and populist leanings

Throughout the early stages of the transition contest it appeared that Zuma was the main contender and the person most likely to get the job – an outcome we will dispute below. However the prominence of Zuma and his backing by the South African Communist Party and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (amongst other groups) has raised the single most common political risk for financial markets: threats to the predictability and stability of macro-economic policy. Thus a possible Zuma presidency may be perceived as potentially:

- beholden to organised left and trade union interests,
- likely to populate cabinet with individuals with an anti-capitalist agenda or those who primarily seek material advantage from office
- easily swayed by sectarian, possibly sinister, interests,
- prepared to pursue policies for their popularity value and not for their appropriateness.

More about this is Section 4, below.

3.4 Zuma – Character

Aside from the actual corruption allegations mentioned in 4.2, to put the icing on the anxiety cookie, Zuma's various statements and legal tribulations have portrayed a man who is:

- a polygamist;
- poorly educated,
- apparently ready to play into ethnic divisions for political advantage,
- undisciplined in his sexual behaviour,
- homophobic

- under the guise of “Zulu traditionalism” unsettlingly cavalier towards women

Any one of these “character” issues might mean little to any particular individual or group who has an interest in the nature of the South African president. However we would be deeply puzzled by the motivation of any individual or group interested in the nature of the South African president who was unconcerned about any of these issues.

4. Alliance struggles over power, ideology and policy

4.1 Ideological contest

The succession contest takes place against a backdrop of much older and vigorous ideological contest within and between organisations in the Ruling Alliance. The debate is important if we are to understand the risks associated with succession in the ANC. However, in the tradition of such debates in communist and other left-wing parties and liberation movements, the language, nuances and subtleties are almost impenetrable to outsiders. Our main effort to explicate and trace the post-1990 economic debate – mostly through using the words of the participants – is in Addendum 1. But, for our purposes here we use a very broad brush.

Pre-1990 members of all levels of the ANC had been schooled in the ideology of the organisation’s most generous backer, the USSR, imbibing a general version of Marxist Leninism and naturally coming to assume this represented the spirit of party policy. This general ideological atmosphere was greatly enforced by the long relationship between the ANC and the SACP. The SACP had been a steadfast ally of the ANC and over a period of about 70 years proven itself a dedicated, brave and, apparently, non-intrusive partner.

A pattern developed whereby the SACP would recruit the finest – skim off the cream - of the ANC’s cadres and subject them to thorough training – ideological, leadership, moral, intellectual and practical – and then send them back into the ANC to take their place as leaders of the National Democratic Revolution, the NDR³. The successful prosecution of the NDR –as elaborated at great length in the ANC’s Strategy and Tactics document – is the *raison d’être* of the ANC and crucial in defining the relationship between the ANC and the SACP.

The SACP is clear that socialism is its goal⁴, but that this does not conflict with being the junior partner in an alliance with the ANC which has national liberation as its goal. The

³The objectives of the “NDR” are to achieve national liberation or self determination of the poorest black majority. “In this sense, such a society is neither a clone of an idealistic capitalist order which is hostage to rampant so-called market forces (particularly in an economy dominated by a few conglomerates), nor an egalitarian utopia of mechanical social parity. Indeed, within the context of a mixed economy, in which market forces have an important role to play, the state has the critical task of ensuring economic growth and development, of meeting people’s social needs and of providing the requisite environment for political stability and the safety and security of citizens” - ANC Strategy and Tactics as amended at 50th National conference 1997

⁴ “The Communist Party is the leading political force of the South African working class and is its vanguard in the struggle for national liberation, socialism and peace in our time. The ultimate aim of the Party is the building of a communist society, towards which it is guided by the principles of Marxism-Leninism. The establishment of a socialist republic in South Africa requires that political and economic

logical trick here that allows two parties with different end goals to have an integrated political/military structure (which they did) is a formulation called “colonialism of a special type”. The full task of the ANC was to overthrow this colonialism, where the colonialists resided in the actual borders of the colony, and build a fully democratic state. The full task of the SACP was to ensure that the struggle against colonialism (Apartheid) was led by the working class and would proceed onto socialism.

That’s all hunky dory until the first bit (the defeat of Apartheid and the rebuilding of a democratic society in its place) is accomplished. It’s a contested point, but it is generally agreed by many mainstream Marxists that “socialism” is an advanced stage of life, only achievable after the revolutionary economic progress brought about by capitalism and requiring a supportive global environment. So the ANC’s National Working Committee is getting on with the awesomely difficult task of holding its head above water and transforming and governing a partially modern country in a modern world – and the SACP seems to be sneeringly accusing them of selling out the struggle for socialism, stuck with their snouts in capitalism’s trough. Hence the conflict..

In the dark years of the ANC’s exile after 1960 there was seldom an inference that the SACP was trying to hijack the struggle for national liberation and rush ahead to socialism. The real break came after national liberation in 1994, when the practicalities of governing exposed the underlying tensions in these two organisations and their respective strategies. Addendum 1 covers this in detail, but to cut to the chase, the SACP felt that the classical features of socialist paths of development were being expunged from government’s economic plans, especially as contained in the 1996 Growth, Employment and Redistribution macro-economic policy with its push for growth and fiscal prudence. The SACP and their allies in the Congress of South African Trade Unions as well as individuals within the ANC bitterly fought what they saw as a rightwards drift in policy. The leading faction of the ANC, headed by Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki, argued that the left was making a number of mistakes leading them to conclude that a socialist path to development was possible now or had ever been on the agenda. In addition the ANC leadership began to clamp down on what they saw as destructive intransigence by the left. Effectively, from the late 1990’s to the early 2000’s the left was deliberately marginalised and the influence of the SACP and Cosatu on actual government decision making severely curtailed.

The intensity of the first stages of the succession battle, in which all major organs of the left effectively, if controversially, backed Zuma, must be seen in the context of this ideological battle.

This is not to suggest that Zuma is a leftist, worker friendly or naturally close to the SACP and Cosatu – in fact the very opposite might be true. The left backing of Zuma, which has caused bitter internal debates in the trade union movement and amongst the

power be firmly placed in the hands of the working class in alliance with the rural masses” -
CONSTITUTION AND RULES OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY, as adopted
8th Party Congress in December 1991

communists, must be understood as primarily an attempt to wield any likely candidate against those who represents the rightward drift of policy, namely Thabo Mbeki and his anointed successor.

Power and its corruptions

Organisations of the left, but particularly the South African Communist Party, have been the most consistent moral watchdog in the Ruling Alliance. They have held government to account for tendencies of “cronyism” and the “compradorist and parasitic” nature of much of the emerging “bourgeois” elite which they argue is characterised by “primitive consumption”⁵; they have insisted government focus on HIV/AIDS and expunge any denialism in its ranks, they have fought for a principled approach to the Zimbabwe situation”, and, most importantly, they have presented themselves as the bastion against corruption within the state, government and business.

The decision (implicit or explicit) to back Zuma’s candidacy has deeply divided the left and soundly removed them from the moral high ground they had come to occupy. Those who won the debate to back Zuma - with the uncontested facts of his unhealthy relationship with the corrupt and fraudulent Shabir Shaik and his distasteful statements about HIV/AIDS, women and Zulu traditionalism already out there in the world – have cast the individuals and organisations of the left as opportunistic and willing to back any candidate from whom they can expect improved political access and influence. Given the idealism of much of the membership of the SACP and like minded groups, the opportunism of some of the left’s current leadership’s will probably prove to be their undoing.

⁵SACP Central Committee Discussion Document. Bua Komanisi - Volume 5, Issue No1 May 2006

5. Leadership criteria, technicalities of ANC voting and shifting balance of forces in ANC regions and affiliate organisations

This year the African National Congress has two major conferences that will have an impact on policy and leadership for years to come. The first of these is the National General Council meeting in late June, early July and the second is the 52nd National Conference (NC), which will be held in Polokwane from 15 – 20th of December.

While the NGC will stamp the character and emphasis of the broad scope of policies the ANC deems to be important, the National Conference will elect the leadership (President, Deputy President, Secretary General, Deputy Secretary General, Chairman, and Treasurer) that will shepherd the ruling party and be responsible for the implementation of these policies for at least the next five years.

The NGC is the subservient conference (in terms of the ANC's constitution) but we can expect it to lay the groundwork for the NC and give an indication of how the leadership context is going. The NGC will give a platform to crucial ANC documents and policy shifts, which are a guide to the criteria and approach that should be used when electing leadership. In general, the broad left and those who have opposed Mbeki's centralisation of power and authority in government and the Cabinet are likely to back policies that greatly increase the Party's power over its representatives in government.

5.1 Through the Eye of the Needle

The ANC has attempted to take the sting out of leadership struggles by identifying in a formal document the ongoing tasks of leadership as well as specific demands of the moment – as determined by the state and stage of the NDR – and the qualities required for specific leaders to be equal to these tasks⁶. Frankly, it is a bit of a stretch to imagine such a simple formula will take the sting from power struggles and produce the objectively optimum candidates for any position. However, the ANC's discussion around these issues is most revealing:

- There is clear concern in the document about the shifting class base of the ANC and an attempt to make the organisation more clearly identified as a party of the workers and the poor (this should be seen as an attempt to draw a line in the sand against the *de facto* drift of the ANC's class base towards the emerging middle classes and business elite) and the implications this has for the kind of leadership required;
- The ANC identifies an increasing danger that people will seek political office because of the possibilities of material gain and advantage that inevitably accompany this – in their own words: “These include the danger of using

⁶ Through the Eye of the Needle - Choosing the best cadres to lead transformation *Umrabulo* Number 11, June-July 2001; and “Contextual considerations in addressing challenges of leadership” – Joel Netshitenzhe, Enoch Gogongwana and Mandla Nkomfe, *Umrabulo* May 25 2006

positions with power of patronage to suppress debate or for individuals to censor themselves and hide their own genuine views to please 'seniors'; corrupt practices which include "buying" of ANC membership cards to load conferences with "voting cattle"; business interests sponsoring candidates so as corruptly to benefit when "their people" are in government; and an intense display of factionalism and even tribalism especially when government positions are at stake.”⁷

In general, ANC leaders, to pass through the eye of the needle, must

- be of impeccable moral character and lead by example
- understand and be able to apply ANC policy and have a full grasp of the totality of forces that operate on the National Democratic Revolution
- always be learning, willing to learn – including from mistakes - from the collective
- never seek popularity, and always propound views for their correctness and not for their acceptability to others
- strive for convergence between personal interests - material, status and otherwise - and the collective interest;
- handle conflict in the course of ANC work by understanding its true origins and seeking to resolve it in the context of struggle and in the interest of the ANC
- win genuine acceptance by the membership, not through suppression, threats or patronage, but by being principled, firm, humble and considerate.

There is a lot of mother’s milk and apple pie in there, but it is also clearly an attempt to keep the riff-raff out.

5.2 ANC traditions

The ANC is proud of its history of leadership from Sol Plaatje and Pixley Seme in the early days to Albert Luthuli, Govan Mbeki, Raymond Mhlaba, Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki. It is an auspicious list and one of which the ANC is justifiably proud. Because of these strong leadership traditions the ANC has historically been overly cautious in its quality control. This is not to say some less than auspicious figures have not managed to slip through the ANC filtration process. It is rather to make the point that the core ANC leadership since the organisation’s formation in 1912 – but more obviously after the mid-1940’s - has been dominated by people who are (or were) intelligent, able to express quiet strength and authority, educated to some degree but without being bookish, anti-populist and incorruptible. Anyone with significantly different – especially opposite – traits and their supporters would meet the full might of the old guard of the movement, who believe themselves inheritors of the traditions and mantle carried by those who have gone before them.

⁷ “Through the eye of a needle” paraphrased in “Contextual considerations in addressing the challenges of leadership” (*ibid*)

5.3 ANC constitution - conferences, branches, alliance partners ANC formations

The ANC constitution spells out how the voting for all positions of office at the National Conference shall take place and the long and the short of this is that “branches” are meant to hold most power:

“10.1.1 Voting delegates:

- a. At least 90% of the voting delegates at Conference shall be from branches, elected at properly constituted branch general meetings. The number of delegates per branch shall be in proportion to its paid up membership.
- b. The number of delegates to be elected to National Conference by each province shall be fixed by the NEC in proportion to the paid up membership of each province.
- c. The remainder of the 10% of voting delegates at the Conference shall be allocated by the NEC from among the Provincial Executive Committees, the ANC Youth League and the ANC Women's League.
- d. All members of the National Executive Committee shall attend ex-officio as full participants in the conference.”⁸

The fact of the matter is it would be naive to think that there is not a mad scramble on the go to recruit members and establish properly constituted branches with the minimum 100 paid up members who have attended one general meeting. The constitution provides for the auditing of this process, but history suggests that the weight and number of votes of provincial delegations changes monthly in the lead-up to the conference and is linked to the informal jockeying for power between both ideological factions and groups seeking other forms of self-interest – as is the case in any political party in the world.

Branches nominate individuals to stand for the 6 positions elected separately at the National Conference: President, Deputy President, National Chairperson, Secretary General, Deputy Secretary General and Treasurer General, who will hold office for five years. Nominations for the 60 person National Executive Committee (this number is under review and likely to be increased to over 100) follows a similar process. From the branches a series of conferences work upwards through “regional” and provincial level. The province collates the nominations from the regional and branch level and sends them to an electoral commission that runs the election at the National Conference.

The nomination process is the moment in which all the possible candidates for leadership, especially for president, will be revealed and the spell of a semi-mythological contest between Jacob Zuma and Mbeki or his chosen successor will be broken. Nominations may continue being ratified all the way into the second half of the year, with candidates only accepting nomination when they are able to assess the strength or otherwise of the opposition.

⁸ African National Congress Constitution - As amended by and adopted at the 51st National Conference, December 2002.

5.4 The real situation

Politics is a famously dirty game and idealistic liberation movements are famous for being, if anything, worse than major parties in the US and the UK. The ANC is not immune to all the brinkmanship, horse-trading, due and undue pressure, schlepting, manipulation and more unusual forms of getting people to do other than what they had planned to do in the first place. Thus from the nomination process until the moment delegates vote on the conference floor, blocks of support for candidates will be being bought and sold in exotic and arcane currencies.

Deals will be struck long before the conference itself. In smoky rooms and in quiet walks in the park, both public and intensely private men and women, will reach or indicate agreement. By the time of the conference itself, the issues are likely to have been decided already; but even if they are still contested, the soldiers armed with the threats of marginalisation and promises of patronage, will be sent onto the conference floor to achieve, by hook or by crook, the decisions of the weightiest factions. This is the very stuff of politics, an irresistible opiate to those who love it, who live for it, their moment in the scrum.

Of course some outcomes are not achievable. The branch really is the fundamental unit of ANC democracy and interventions to determine outcomes start very early in the provinces and regions— in fact are probably in full swing already. Voting delegations are weighted by the number of “branches in good standing” (an audited entity, duly recognised, that consists of one hundred paid up members who attend regular meetings - as a basic minimum requirement) in a particular region of a province. Many hundreds of wannabe branches don’t make the cut, especially the kind that are now being set up by gathering together those pretty girl cousins of Sandile’s drinking buddy, granny’s church friends and some of the nice men who sleep down by the bus shelter and who are always prepared to come along for some tea with condensed milk and biscuits. They will be only too happy to vote for Reverend X, who’s promised us that school bus The 2005 ANC Secretary General’s reported stated that the audited ANC membership stood at 440708. To see how this translates into audited branches in good standing per region and province see the extract from the 2005 Organisational Report from the office of Kgalema Motlanthe, ANC Secretary General - Addendum 2.

At the 2002 conference in Stellenbosch there were 1743 accredited branch delegates ranging from 426 from the Eastern Cape at the top end to 195 from the Western Cape at the bottom.

The balance of power in the provinces between the “pro-Zuma” versus the “pro-Mbeki” camps – to put it unrealistically positively – changes everyday, but at the moment the snapshot looks something like this:

Eastern Cape

Mbeki is still more than a head in front in the ANC’s heartland. The OR Tambo region at the heart of the Eastern Cape in Mthatha is the biggest ANC region in the country and together with Chris Hani has made a play at supporting Zuma. As we stand today the

Nelson Mandela region in Port Elizabeth and Amathole in East London have successfully passed a resolution at the Eastern Cape Provincial conference calling for Mbeki to serve a 3rd term as president of the ANC. In addition the conference elected long term Mbeki ally, Stone Sizani, as the provincial chairman of the ANC.

KwaZulu Natal

This is Zuma heartland – largely for reasons of ethnicity, but also because Zuma did good work helping bring peace between the IFP and the ANC – and Mbeki’s man, Premier S’bu Ndebele, has been battered by his region’s state of semi rebellion. The big dogs on Mbeki’s team have abandoned a macro-approach to KwaZulu and are concentrating on cutting out and solidifying regions that are not pro-Zuma, anti-Mbeki or are already pro-Mbeki. The Mail & Guardian (February 9, 2007) reckons the pro-Mbeki camp can take 150 of the probable 500 votes away from the ANC Deputy President.

Gauteng and the rest

Gauteng, Western Cape, North West, Northern Cape are all, to greater or lesser degrees, tending towards Mbeki, but with residual support for Zuma in each of these provinces. In the Free State Province, Mbeki has made some powerful enemies which probably puts the majority of delegates beyond his reach. Mpumlanga and Limpopo are hedging their bets, which again will split the vote on the conference floor whatever the delegates are mandated to do on the day.

ANC’s Women League and Youth League and Provincial Executive Committee

The ANC Women’s League (ANCWL), the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) and members of Provincial Executive Committees are allocated the leftover 10 percent of the votes in whichever proportion the ANC NEC sees fit. While these are not significant numbers of votes, the ANC’s “leagues” traditionally have a high degree of influence in voting outcomes.

The ANCYL is the backbone of Zuma’s support, and are prepared to go to the extreme lengths to secure unanimity in this support – they recently disbanded structures of their Eastern Cape region for going against the pro-Zuma line. The Youth League itself is in disarray and is deeply implicated in corruption surrounding the Brett Kebble /JCI debacle and a lot of dirt will still flow from this. So Zuma or his proxy will get the votes and vigorous and energetic campaigning from the youth, but he will also reap the tainted fruits of their unseemly liaison with Brett Kebble.

The ANCWL might be as politicised and factionalised as the rest of the ANC – but are leaning distinctly towards Mbeki - and logic dictates that they are going have a hard time getting over the fact that Zuma argued at various times in his rape trial:

- that the young woman was indicating her availability for sex because of how she dressed;
- that, despite knowing she was HIV positive, he thought taking a shower after the act would help protect him;

More murky, but definitely out there as a sentiment is that Zuma slept with a woman as young as one of his daughters; a woman who was the child of an old comrade of his, and from whom he had inherited the obligation to protect and nurture her, as if she was a child of his own.

The ANCWL is taking a stronger and more militant stand against the abuse of women including abuse perpetrated by powerful political figures⁹

⁹ See the December 2006 expulsion from the party and from parliament of the ANC's chief whip, Mbulelo Goniwe for charges of sexual harassment after he made persistent and unwanted sexual demands on 21 year old ANC parliamentary administrative assistant Momawele Njongo after she had helped serve dinner to guests at Goniwe's house.

6. The Candidates waiting in the wings

6.1 The generic good candidate



Seniority in the ANC, at least in part based on having played an effective and senior role in the ANC in exile, is a big plus. Having made an extraordinary amount of money out of BEE deals may count against you, although this will be ameliorated by frugality and charity. Being pure as the driven snow and poor as a church mouse but a loyal and strong ANC functionary is a plus. "Gravitas, meaning weight, seriousness, dignity and wisdom is essential.

6.2 Phumzile Mlambo Ngcuka



Current Deputy President (having replaced Zuma when Mbeki dismissed him. Previously Minister of Minerals and Energy, presiding over leaked mining charter debacle, but also followed up to reassure markets by speaking effectively to fund managers in Europe and the US. She's personable, energetic, young. She is connected, through her family and on her own terms to the emerging black super-rich. She was probably Mbeki's first choice. Her candidacy has been badly damaged during the battle between Zuma and Mbeki - her husband, Bulelani Ngcuka, was the then head of public prosecutions who made the statement that there was a prima facie case against Zuma that he was not confident of winning in court (August 2003) - widely interpreted as an Mbeki inspired attempt to put a stop to a Zuma challenge.

6.3 Jacob Zuma



The main contender apparent. Head of ANC underground intelligence in late 1980s – swings a lot of weight. Warm and charismatic. Was MEC for Economic Affairs and Tourism in KwaZulu/Natal and Deputy Secretary General of ANC and Premier of KwaZulu. Successful mediator in peace process in KZN and in Burundi. Has had various brushes with the law including corruption charges which led to his dismissal as Deputy President by President Mbeki. At the time of writing the state has not yet reinstated charges thrown out of court by Judge Msimang late last year but is clearly pushing hard to gather evidence.

6.4 Cyril Rampahosa



Favourite son of both Mandela and Joe Slovo (deceased - head of SACP and probably of equal stature to Mandela in some party circles). They picked him to succeed Mandela but were outmanoeuvred. He led the ANC team that negotiated the end of Apartheid which led to elections in 1994 and the start of the democratic transition. After conflict with Mbeki he withdrew into business where he has been a major beneficiary of Black Economic Empowerment. He continues to be voted near the top of the list for executive members at ANC conferences i.e. he remains popular. He is seen to be the favoured candidate of white business and the financial markets – might count against him. He played no significant exile role but central to UDF and Gen. Sec National Union of Mineworker. Likes fly-fishing and fine whisky.

6.5 Tokyo Sexwale



Popular, ex-Robben Islander and exile; flamboyant – soldier adventurer type, trained in USSR for the ANC before his capture. After 1994 turned to business with a lot of flair (Mvelaphanda Holdings) and undoubtedly made the system work for him in a very successful way. He is probably the most charismatic character with the broadest appeal amongst this lot. He also has the ability to build a strong and loyal group around himself - hints of "cult of the personality".. He is rich and flash enough for this to count against him. He has constantly denied that he may run but there are constant rumours that he is assembling a team to make a run for the top job.

6.6 Joel Netshitenzhe



The intellectual behind the intellectual. Netshitenzhe is as widely known for his shy and retiring character as he is for being almost universally liked and respected in ANC circles. He has been the understudy to Mbeki, in much the same way as Mbeki was to Oliver Tambo, the man who held the ANC together in exile. It is unlikely that Netshitenzhe would want the job, but he could land it in a compromise and therefore must be on the list (and he is certainly the most literate, considered, educated and anti-populist of the bunch). Undoubtedly the safest pair of hands in the crop.

6.7 Saki Macozoma



Kingmaker and successful businessman, Saki Macozoma is possibly the closest and most powerful political ally of Thabo Mbeki. He has played a central role in the ANC's "intervention" into business i.e. he has always and primarily acted as if he has been seconded to business as a loyal ANC cadre. Thus apparently not primarily being motivated by wealth but rather the strengthening of black participation in economy and building party finances should counts in his favour. He is an extremely powerful ANC player and seen by some to be the force behind the campaign against Zuma. Probably not a candidate himself.

6.8 Kgalema Motlanthe



Mothlanthe has been punted as the most likely compromise candidate - although he should be seen as a serious contender, against Mbeki, in his own right. He has taken flak from both camps for not keeping the ANC intact and not showing adequate strength in holding the organisation together in its time of tribulation (which is part of his job as ANC Secretary General). Mothlanthe - before the internal battles of the ANC - had exceptional "gravitas", a strong history in the trade union movement and widespread respect in all sections of the movement.

6.9 Trevor Manuel



Longest serving finance minister, extremely successful in building a strong department with effective non-racial leadership. Has enormous respect internationally and in the financial markets as well as on the ANC conference floor. The fact that he is a "coloured" South African, as opposed to an "African" South African, along with the fact that he never played a role in the exile movement of the ANC probably puts him out of the running for the top job – but beyond that he can probably write his own ticket. There is a lot of talk about him being a Deputy President – the counter is that he is too good a Finance Minister to let go.

6.10 Mbhasima Shilowa



Premier of Gauteng, independent thinker and successful in running his province (which is the economic heartland of country), also has good union credibility. He is married into the apex of the new economic elite which might count against him. He was president of the Transport and General Workers Union and General Secretary of Cosatu in 1993 – where he played a crucial role in setting up the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac). Definitely an outsider, but could help play a king maker role for Mbeki.

6.11 Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma



DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THIS CANDIDATE.!

Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma is currently Minister of Foreign Affairs. She is respected and powerful in ANC - including with "the left" - but lacks a certain charisma and doesn't come across warm and fuzzy in public. Her performances in Health and Foreign affairs have been solid and without much controversy or exceptional achievement. She is also the ex-wife of Jacob, but is probably in the "Mbeki" camp. Again, a much stronger candidate within the ANC than might appear from without.

6.12 Tito Mboweni



Being punted as a serious contender in some circles, Tito Mboweni is more likely to be in the running next time around. He has kept good links with all sectors of society (including the union movement) and emerging black business. Because of his position he is not actually within the "new elite camp", but can traverse the constituencies quite easily. He seems an unlikely candidate, reinforced by his position as SARB governor – it's not an obvious path to the presidency. But he is the candidate of certain sections of business and a possible compromise, so he must be kept in consideration.

6.13 Mosiuoa "Terror" Lekota



ANC National Chairman, Minister of Defence. The "Terror" comes from soccer, not politics or revolutionary war. He is widely liked in a twinkly-eyed uncle sort of way. He was a key UDF leader but this leaves him with little influence amongst the heavyweight exiles and Robben Islanders. He has acquitted himself adequately (just) as premier of Free State province till 1996 and as Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces from 1997 to 1999.

Addendum 1: A brief history of Alliance economic policy shifts

1. The Freedom Charter. June 1955

"The nationalization of mines, banks and monopoly industry is the policy of the ANC and the change or modification of our views in this regard is inconceivable"

Nelson Mandela paraphrasing the Freedom Charter on his release from prison in 1990

2. The 48th ANC National Conference. July 1991

"We are convinced that neither a commandist central planning system nor an unfettered free market system can provide adequate solutions .."

Conference resolution

3. Macro Economic Research Group (MERG). December 1993

"It was a demand-led and internal infrastructural development proposal, which envisaged less immediate concern with budget deficit reduction and inflation."

African Communist No 147, third quarter 1997

4. Reconstruction and Development Programme. January 1994

"Of particular importance was the proposal to restructure the economy by way of a policy of 'growth through redistribution in which redistribution acts as a spur to growth and in which the fruits of growth are redistributed to satisfy basic needs'. This proposal was predicated on the central policy idea that the state needed to boost demand, primarily by ensuring that greater amounts of income would be received by the poorer sections of the population, which in turn would stimulate output and hence economic growth."

Dennis Davis in From the Freedom Charter to the Washington Consensus 2002

5. Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) as a structural adjustment programme. June 1996

"Despite its ideology while in opposition, once in power the ANC government implemented an orthodox macroeconomic policy which stressed deficit reduction and a tight monetary policy, combined with trade liberalisation. The stated purpose of this package (the Growth, Employment, and Redistribution programme, or GEAR) was to increase economic growth, with a 4.2% rate programmed for 1996-2000. At mid-term of the programme, growth remained far below this target. The GEAR's lack of success cannot be explained by unfavourable external factors; rather, the disappointing performance seemed the result of fiscal contraction and excessively high interest rates"

Abstract: Stuck in Low GEAR? Macroeconomic Policy in South Africa, 1996-98 John Weeks Cambridge Journal of Economics, 1999, vol. 23, issue 6, pages 795-811

6. GEAR as a stabilization programme – circa 1998

" Faced with deepening unemployment, poverty, and inequality, and with disappointing growth and investment, the GEAR policy framework has met with persisting criticism from COSATU and the SACP in particular. From the side of its principal proponents within the government, there have been several adjustments in the face of disappointment. Increasingly, GEAR has been redefined as a conjunctural stabilization program and not what its acronym suggested it once aspired to be (a growth, employment and redistribution strategy). In this rereading, GEAR was necessitated by global turbulence and by a very precarious foreign currency reserve situation in 1996. Its "success" is now measured not in terms of growth, employment, and redistribution outcomes, but anecdotally and by way of comparison—"whatever our problems, South Africa's economy is not in the same predicament as Argentina, or Turkey, or Zimbabwe," or "GEAR has helped us to survive the worst of global turbulence" (which may not be completely incorrect)."

Jeremy Cronin, SACP Secretary General, in Monthly Review December 2002

7. THE DEVELOPMENTAL STATE – late 2003

In an address to the Socialist International October 2003 and then various speeches in 2004, Mbeki argued that solving unemployment, poverty and low levels of black participation in ownership and control of the economy had become very urgent. Further, he said, to solve these problems an effective, strong and interventionist developmental state is needed. He put the case for improving the public service and extending the state's influence and ability to lead the economy. "Influence" meant keeping hold of strategic state assets (and a partial withdrawal from privatisation) as well as a detailing of micro-reforms including BEE. Strong emphasis on private public partnerships as well as galvanizing a collective consciousness about the "common good". From this shift the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (AsgiSA) was codified 2005/2006 – while it sets targets for growth and employment, Asgisa is primarily a infrastructure investment programme combined with various (mostly supply-side) measures to "remove impediments to growth".

8. The organised left suggests that the ANC has been hijacked by a capitalist class project

This is the definitive statement from the left attacking the direction that the Mbeki government has taken: "the post-1996 class project" was led by a "technocratic vanguardist" state with the mission for "a restoration of the conditions for capitalist profit accumulation on a new and supposedly sustainable basis." (as opposed to "a revolutionary ... transformation ... to resolve the .. contradictions in favour of .. working class .."). The document argues that the project rests on three shaky pillars: 1.) the ANC leadership has mistakenly bought into a myth of a gentler, kinder world, but imperialism is stronger and more hostile to popular democracy than ever; 2.) to fit into this world "the second pillar of the project is a powerful presidential centre" that necessarily installs a top state/ leadership group of "state managers and technocratically-inclined ministers) and (often overlapping with them) a new generation of black private sector BEE.; 3.) the organisational modernisation of the ANC" ... "to transform the ANC from a mobilising mass movement into a 'modern', centre- left, electoral party". Flowing from this is "the manifest inability of capitalist stabilisation and growth to resolve the deep seated social and economic crises of unemployment, poverty and radical inequality in our society, - the ravages to the ANC's organisational capacity and coherence caused by the attempts to assert a managerialist, technocratic control over a mass movement, and - the crises of corruption, factionalism and personal careerism inherent in trying to build a leading cadre based on (explicit or implicit) capitalist values and on a symbiosis between the leading echelons of the state and emerging black capital."

SACP Central Committee Discussion Document. Bua Komanisi - Volume 5, Issue No1 May 2006

9. The ANC spells it out to the left

"...the trapeze act here is to co-opt the ANC, formally, as an organisation pursuing socialism; and then condemn it as having betrayed the socialist project". First, and most importantly the ANC denies that the ANC ever was or should have been an organisation whose objectives was to achieve socialism. The ANC, the document claims, is the organic result of the struggle of black South Africans for national liberation and redress for what they suffered and lost under Apartheid. Additionally the ANC prioritises the poor and the working class. Once this point is made, the ANC argues, all the rest of the SACP critique falls away.. The ANC accuses the authors of the SACP document of "ahistoricism, subjectivism and voluntarism". This is more than just name calling. In the argument of the authors of this document: ahistoricism refers to the SACP's alleged failure to understand what led to the present conditions as well as the character of the historical moment in which they find themselves, subjectivism means that the SACP has used its own preconceptions to guide its views and has seen the world as they wish it to be rather than how it really is; voluntarism means the SACP believes that through pure force of will, hard work and determination they can achieve socialism in South Africa, whatever limitations the domestic or global environment and balance of forces, especially the strength of global capital markets impose on possible outcomes.

MANAGING NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC TRANSFORMATION - ANC RESPONSE TO SACP DISCUSSION DOCUMENT – 19 June 2006 (which is the ANC National Working Committees formal response to the above)NWC's response to an SACP Central Committee discussion document published in Bua Komanisi, Vol. 5, Issue No. 1, May 2006

Addendum 2

	AUDITED FOR NGC (28 FEBRUARY 2005)				AUDITED FOR PROVINCIAL CONFERENCES (VARIOUS DATES)			
	Potential branches (Wards)	Branches in good standing	% Wards in good standing	Membership	Potential branches (Wards)	Branches in good standing	% Wards in good standing	Membership
EASTERN CAPE	603	241	40%	70,651	603	241	40%	70,651
Cacadu DC10	53	29	55%	4,324				
Amathole DC12	167	40	24%	17,046				
Chris Hani DC13	96	45	47%	8,129				
Ukhahlamba DC14	42	24	57%	3,612				
O.R. Tambo DC15	142	64	45%	25,142				
Alfred Nzo DC44	49	29	59%	5,565				
Nelson Mandela Metro NM	54	10	19%	6,833				
FREE STATE	291	102	35%	26,983	291	238	82%	38,331
Xhariep DC16	17	6	35%	2,724				
Motheo DC17	55	35	64%	6,396				
Lejweleputswa DC18	69	0	0%	1,110				
Thabo Mofutsanyane DC19	83	27	33%	6,327				
Northern Free State DC20	67	34	51%	10,426				
GAUTENG	447	206	46%	41,639	447	206	46%	58,223
Metsweding CBDC2	18	2	11%	531				
West Rand CBDC8	92	38	41%	6,713				
Sedibeng DC42	63	28	44%	5,625				
Ekurhuleni Metro EK	89	29	33%	6,394				
Johannesburg Metro JB	109	62	57%	11,484				
Tshwane Metro TS	76	47	62%	10,892				
KWAZULU NATAL	756	430	57%	66,676	757	530	70%	75,035
Lower South Coast DC21	81	41	51%	5,527				
Greater Pietermaritzburg DC22	81	59	73%	7,542				
Ukhahlamba DC23	69	37	54%	4,566				
Bhambatha/Greater Msinga DC24	47	24	51%	3,452				
Malahleni DC25	45	21	47%	3,357				
Abaqulusi DC26	81	38	47%	4,362				
Far North DC27	58	40	69%	4,295				
North Coast DC28	97	37	38%	4,933				
KwaDukuza DC29	65	28	43%	5,208				
East Griqualand DC43	32	30	94%	5,874				
Thekwini Metro TK	100	75	75%	17,560				

	AUDITED FOR NGC (28 FEBRUARY 2005)				AUDITED FOR PROVINCIAL CONFERENCES (VARIOUS DATES)			
	Potential branches (Wards)	Branches in good standing	% Wards in good standing	Membership	Potential branches (Wards)	Branches in good standing	% Wards in good standing	Membership
LIMPOPO	474	277	58%	52,489	474	401	85%	56,474
Sekhukune CBDC3	110	59	54%	12,538				
Mopani DC33/CBDC4	105	45	43%	7,181				
Vhembe DC34	85	62	73%	10,762				
Capricorn DC35	106	81	76%	14,279				
Waterberg DC36	68	30	44%	7,729				
MPUMALANGA	389	205	53%	49,703	405	302	75%	48,239
Bohlabela CBDC4	34	26	76%	11,307				
Gert Sibande DC30	120	60	50%	10,885				
Ekangala DC31	137	61	45%	13,358				
Ehlanzeni DC32	98	58	59%	14,423				
NORTH WEST	351	211	60%	38,436	388	282	73%	39,006
Kgalagadi CBDC1	24	16	67%	3,360				
Bojanala DC37	122	66	54%	11,454				
Central DC38	88	39	44%	6,946				
Bophirima DC39	54	41	76%	9,471				
Southern DC40	63	49	78%	7,205				
NORTHERN CAPE	150	107	71%	17,298	163	110	67%	21,608
Namakwa DC6	30	23	77%	3,725				
Pixley ka Seme DC7	38	18	47%	3,316				
Siyanda DC8	34	34	100%	4,753				
Frances Baard DC9	48	32	67%	5,504				
WESTERN CAPE	331	156	47%	37,588	331	254	77%	33,141
West Coast DC1	41	15	37%	2,753				
Boland DC2	87	29	33%	6,959				
Overberg DC3	29	15	52%	2,557				
South Cape DC4	67	35	52%	6,501				
Karoo DC5	7	7	100%	1,350				
Cape Town Metro CT	100	55	55%	17,468				
TOTAL	3,792	1,935	51%	401,463	3,859	2,564	66%	440,708