

Communism: Not the riddle, but the solution



**SOCIALISM
IN OUR
LIFETIME!**

Y-REDS

DECEMBER 2010

VOICE OF THE YOUNG COMMUNIST
LEAGUE OF SOUTH AFRICA



IN PRAISE OF COMMUNISM

YCL CONGRESS EDITION



YCL 3RD NATIONAL CONGRESS PROGRAMME

8 December 2010

8am-5pm

- Registration

9 December 2010

8am-1pm

- Singing of National Anthem, Internationale and Red Flag
- Opening Address by National Chairperson
- Adoption of the agenda
- Adoption of credentials
- Adoption of Congress rules
- Introduction of guests
- Address by WFDY
- Address by National Secretary
- Keynote address by SACP General Secretary

1pm-2pm

- Lunch

2pm-7pm

- Secretariat report
- Financial report
- Constitutional review commission
- Election of national office bearers

8pm-11pm

- Revolutionary movies
 - Bram Fischer
 - Rick Turner

10 December 2010

8am-10am

- Address by Kgalema Motlanthe
- Messages of Support (ANC YL, Cosas, Sasco)
- Address by YCLSA veteran (Ahmed Kathrada)

10am-1pm

- Commissions

1pm-2pm

- Lunch

2pm-5pm

- Commissions

6pm-7pm

- Nomination and election of additional members

7pm-11pm

- Gala dinner and awards ceremony
 - Ebrahim Patel (main speaker)

11 December 2010

8am-10am

- Cosatu address
- Messages of Support (Cuba, China, Western Sahara and Swaziland)

10am-1pm

- Commission Reports

1pm-2pm

- Lunch

2pm-8pm

- Commission Reports

8pm-11pm

- Poetry, Hip-Hop and Ragga Session (Open MIC, Stand Up Comedy, 1 Live Artist and 2 DJ's)

12 December 2010

8am-11am

- Adoption of Draft Programme of Action
- Adoption of Declaration of National Congress
- Closing Address by newly elected National Secretary

12 noon-3pm

- Closing rally (Montshiwa Stadium)
Speakers:
 - Newly elected National Secretary
 - Jacob Zuma
 - Blade Nzimande
 - S'dumo Dlamini



YCL NATIONAL CONGRESS

Post-Polokwane perspective: ensuring working class interests

Extract from the political report to Congress

The ANC's popularity and dominance of politics is a source of strength for the democratic movement.

The ANC has been put into power on a progressive platform to accelerate change. No political party seems likely to dislodge it from its position of hegemony. For the foreseeable future, notwithstanding isolated areas, the ANC's grip to power seems unassailable. But the continuing future of this is conditional upon the ANC making progress in improving the material conditions of the majority of the people.

Electoral strength on its own is not adequate to ensure a progressive outcome. The balance of class forces is the decisive factor that will ensure that the ANC implements measures to change the policy landscape. The ANC was the majority party in 1996 but implemented conservative economic policies. The balance of class forces then culminated in the implementation of Gear. Strategic challenge facing the progressive forces is how to ensure that working class interest shapes the policy discourse in government? That outcome depends clearly on building working class power.

But no amount of focus on the internal context – including balance of forces – is sufficient for desired outcomes to be achieved.

It is important that we extensively examine South Africa's external position and the impact of the international balance of forces in the country. For example there is a possibility for the working

class to still be constrained from making the progress that it wants even if it could win the balance of forces domestically, that being subject to a possibility of unfavourable international balance of forces including the increasingly dominant role of multi-national corporations (MNCs) in our economy. What would be our response to that situation? Is that not what the ANC has partially found itself in over a larger proportion of the period since the inception of the democratic dispensation (irrespective of the fact that in many instances, the conservative economic policies of the ANC were more submissive to conditions set by local capital in its desire to maintain economic control and power? Under such possibilities how would we differently conduct the national democratic revolution (NDR) from what is going on presently?

That said, we can broadly say that the domestic balance of forces are mostly favourable to a progressive agenda. In the first, instance, the global economic crisis has shaken confidence in the neo-liberal dogma and has also opened up spaces to experiment with new ideas. Unless we occupy this space by articulating a coherent agenda the right-wing may remobilise by for instance recreating their old ideas. This happened in the aftermath of the 1997 economic crisis. The World Bank and IMF were forced to repackage structural adjustment programme by calling them Poverty Reduction Papers.

Within the ANC-led alliance we have also witnessed an attempt to redirect the

course of the NDR by a New Tendency. The anti-Mbeki coalition quickly unravelled after the 2009 elections. It is clear that the glue that bound us together was not ideology but common disenchantment with the Mbeki era. It is also clear that what the left had identified as a principled opposition towards the way in which the ANC and the Alliance were run, and the need for change, was used as mere rhetoric by some within the ANC to get rid of former President Mbeki.

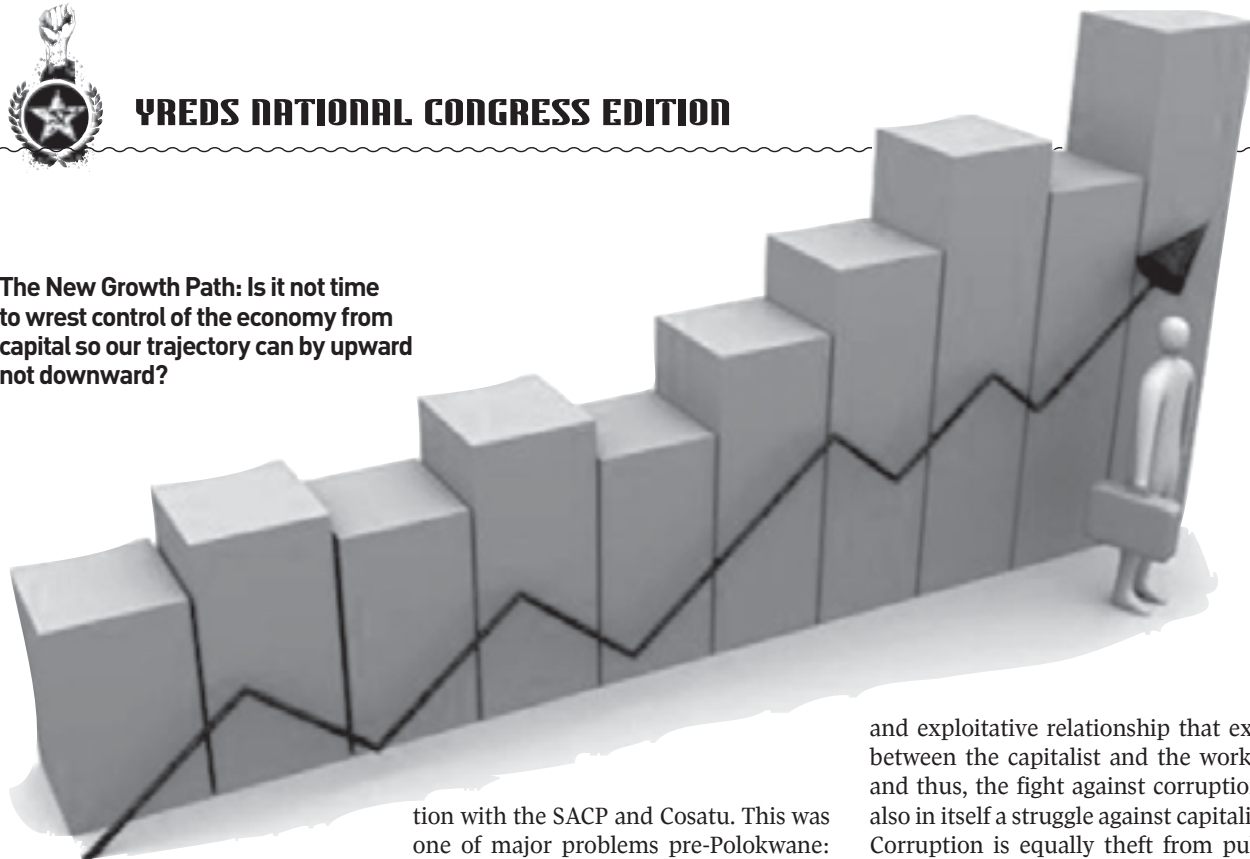
The rupture of the Polokwane alliance (to use a term) has manifested in two inter-linked ways. In the first instance is the whipping of anti-communist hysteria within the ANC. This 'rooi-gevaar' ploy is an attempt to mobilise ANC members against the supposed take-over of the ANC by Cosatu and the SACP.

Second, there has been a premature opening of the leadership contestation for the top six ANC positions. In addition, assertions by those who started this premature election campaign that President Zuma's position itself is not safe due to the fact that there is no unequivocal stance that he will serve two terms, has further deepened divisions not only within the ANC but also with its alliance partners.

The NGC has called for a moratorium on electioneering for the 2012 ANC Conference, and the need for discipline even amongst its structures and members. However the die is cast as a grouping within the ANC has now nailed their colours to the mast in terms of their preference for leadership. In this context



The New Growth Path: Is it not time to wrest control of the economy from capital so our trajectory can by upward not downward?



the debate on nationalisation has been used to intimidate people from expressing their views for fear of not being supported in the 2012 Conference. There is no doubt that the campaign is being conducted clandestinely; and there is no reason to believe that it would not follow the same lines highlighted above.

As indicated, government was reconfigured by President Zuma after the 2009 general elections. It remains an open question whether the hoped-for improvement in development planning, coordination and implementation has been achieved. In fact it is too early to evaluate the impact of the changes in government.

Recently, the President reshuffled his cabinet by removing seven Ministers and appointing new ones and four new deputies. Although the reasons for the reshuffle have not been openly stated, it is clear that the President's signal is to accelerate delivery. Some of the former Ministers were dogged by corruption allegations, and this clearly could have also influenced the President's decision to change his cabinet.

The substantial reshuffling of cabinet mid-term is an unprecedented act in the post-apartheid era. There is no doubt however that the President seems to be focusing the energy of government on implementation. Evidence of this includes the signing of performance agreements with Ministers. We must emphasise that the tradition which began with the appointment of this Cabinet, although the prerogative of the President, should be premised with consulta-

tion with the SACP and Cosatu. This was one of major problems pre-Polokwane: a commitment towards a strong alliance should not be undermined by continuing with this tradition.

At policy level government and the ANC leadership have been sending mixed signals. On the one hand they suggest that the 'fundamental' of macroeconomic management will be retained. In contrast, there is a signal that policy is likely to change on some questions like rural development, a New Growth Path strategy and reprioritised industrial policy interventions. Is this not the perhaps the time for the Alliance to boldly have the courage on economic questions and wrest control from the corporate sector especially given the fact that the neo-liberal agenda has failed our economy? To what extent does Cosatu's Growth Path and the SACP's interventions of the New Growth Path complement various interventions generated from the ANC NGC on the way forward, and a bold recommitment towards changing the economic trajectory in order to change the lives of our people?

There is clear commitment by the current government to deal effectively with corruption both in the public and private sector. We should however restate, as the YCLSA, that corruption is inherent within capitalism, and that at the core of capitalist production is the corrupt

Corruption is theft from the public resources meant to improve our people's lives

and exploitative relationship that exists between the capitalist and the workers, and thus, the fight against corruption is also in itself a struggle against capitalism. Corruption is equally theft from public resources meant to improve the quality of life of our people. There is a distortion that the campaign against corruption is a fight against wealth accumulation by Black individuals, and an inference that rich Black people are corrupt. This is not true, the reality is that "tenderpreneurship" is a threat to entrepreneurship, and that it should be fought at all levels as it distorts the economy, promotes political infighting and destroys possible job opportunities. We assert that there is a link between corruption and the manipulation of democratic processes within our structures as individuals use their largesse to fund electoral platforms within our organisations.

The campaign against corruption, in the current instance for example when government is looked at from its programme on the matter, is not a fight against legitimate business dealings but against the corrupt nature of some of the dealings under capitalism. We have to also insist that allegations of corruption should never be used as a platform to purge political opponents, as was the case in the build up to Polokwane, but individuals who are accused of corruption should not hide behind this principle, and should rather clear themselves on any corruption allegation.

Finally, we must intensify the campaign to ensure that politicians, in particular public office bearers and representatives do not hold any business interests. If someone wants to be a politician, then they must focus on servicing the people and not filling in tender documents. That is one of the reasons why politicians are better paid. ●



IPAP 2

The nuts and bolts of the New Growth Path

Halting the decline of SA's industry and manufacturing – on the principle of 'learning by doing'

BY SIKHUMBUZO THOMO

The Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP 2) is a three-year rolling industrial-related roadmap for the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) for 2010-2013.

IPAP 2 is fundamentally a policy and action plan designed to help build South Africa's industrial base in critical sectors of production and value-added manufacturing, which are largely labour absorbing industries. IPAP 2 is therefore designed to address the decline in our industrial and manufacturing capacity and contribute to the reduction of chronic employment.

IPAP 2 is a product of intensive work by the Economic Sectors and Employment Cluster of Ministers and Departments, and reflects the fact that although the Department of Trade & Industry stands at the centre of much of industrial policy and practice, other departments and agencies also play an important role in this regard.

IPAP 2 was adopted by the Cabinet in February 2010, following a consultation process with labour, business and industry organisations, academic and research institutions and the public. It draws on the theory and practice of other developing countries, builds on the policy perspectives of the National Industrial Policy Framework (NIPF) of 2007, and reflects on and builds from the practical experience of the recent past.

It is premised on the understanding that it is one pillar of the 'New Growth Path' comprising a larger set of inter-related policies and strategies, brought together under the Economic Development Department.

IPAP 2 has four horizontal or transversal themes around which a number of interventions are built, namely: industrial

financing, procurement, competition policy, and developmental trade policies. It comprises 13 vertical strategies, clustered into sectors, whose potential require new and sustained support – those establishes sectors that require scaling up of interventions and those that demonstrate great potential over medium-to-long-term. IPAP 2 sets out the economic rationale; key constraints and opportunities; key action programmes (KPs); and the motive forces and quarterly milestones for all its interventions across all sites, departments, SOEs and agencies. It requires greater levels of policy coherence and programme integration across departments and agencies if it is to succeed.

During the previous administration, Cabinet adopted the NIPF in January 2007 setting out the South African government's broad approach to industrialisation with the following core objectives:

- Facilitating diversification beyond our current reliance on traditional commodities and non-tradable services; this require the promotion increased in value-addition characterised particularly by movement into non-traditional tradable goods and services that compete in export markets and also against imports.
- The long-term intensification of South Africa's industrialisation process and movement towards a knowledge economy;
- The promotion of a more labour-

absorbing industrialisation path with the emphasis on tradable labour-absorbing goods and services and economic linkages that create employment;

- The promotion of industrialisation characterised by the increased participation of historical disadvantaged people and marginalised regions in the industrial economy; and

- Contributing to industrial development on the African continent, with a strong emphasis on building its productive capacity.

Guided by the NIPF, the implementation of industrial policy should be set in an Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP). In August 2007 Cabinet approved the first Plan, which reflected mainly on the 'easy-to-do' actions. The 2008-09 IPAP has largely been implemented. Highlights include:

- Strengthening of the Competition Act to introduce stronger investigative powers and personal liability;
- Finalisation of the revised programme for the automotive sector for 2013-2020; the Automotive Production and the Development Programme (APDP). This provides long-term certainty, creating conditions for meeting the production target of 1,2 million vehicles by 2020, with substantial deepening and broadening the industry;
- Development a fundamentally new support programme for the clothing and textiles industry aimed at upgrading competitiveness in order to recapture domestic market share;
- Attraction of substantial investment in business process services with resultant job creation;
- Lowering of input costs through the removal or lowering of a range import tariffs, particularly on key intermediate

IPAP 2 is an action plan to build critical sectors of production and manufacturing



items and materials for manufacture. Tariffs have been removed or lowered on products including primary chemicals, aluminium and certain textiles not produced in sufficient commercial quantities in South Africa; and

- Strengthening energy-efficient standards in response to the national electricity shortage.

However there has been a growing recognition that the industrial policy needs to be scaled up from 'easy-to-do' actions to 'need-to-do' interventions to generate a new path of industrialisation. This mandate has been strengthened under the new administration and was formalised in the President's State of the Nation address on June 03, 2009: "Building on the successes of our industrial policy interventions, a scaled up industrial Policy Action Plan will be developed".

A process of intensive consultation and analysis led by the Minister of Trade and Industry culminated in a revised IPAP for 2010-13. It was recognised that a one-year IPAP is too short a period and hence future IPAPs will be three year rolling periods, updated annually and with a 10-year outlook on desired economic outcomes. The current IPAP represents a significant step forward in industrial policy efforts. Because it is viewed an updated annually, it will continually be strengthened and upscaled.

Structural imbalances in South Africa's current growth path

Prior to the global economic crisis of the 2008 and 2009, South Africa achieved relatively high growth rates, particularly in 2005-200. However, these growth rates mask key structural challenges in the South African economy.

- First, South Africa's growth rate has been lower than the average among medium- and low-income countries.

- Second, growth has been driven by unsustainable increases in credit extension and consumption that are not sufficiently underpinned by growth of the production sectors in the economy. Thus, consumption-driven sectors (finance and insurance, real estate, transport and storage, communication, wholesale and retail, catering and accommodation) grew by 107% between 1994 and 2008 (7.7 % annually). By contrast, production sectors (agriculture, mining, manufacturing, electricity and water, and construction) grew by only 41% (2.9 % annually). This has led to large and unsustainable imbalances in the economy, particularly a large current account deficit (the difference between

The financial sector's phenomenal growth flows from a massive increase in granting credit

what we export and what we import).

- Third, even at the peak of recent average annual growth of 5,1% between 2005 and 2007, unemployment did not fall below 22,8% (using the narrow definition of unemployment figures).

Manufacturing

Manufacturing accounts for the biggest share of the production sectors of the economy: 54,3% in 2008. Within manufacturing itself, there has been a wide divergence of performance. Though the Motor Industry Development Programme (MIDP), the automotive sector has more than doubled its size since 1994, with an exponential growth in exports, but there are remaining challenges in terms of localisation and job creation. The natural resource-based sectors have also demonstrated relatively strong growth. These are capital- and energy-intensive sectors, most of which were established through the variety of apartheid-era industrial policies and have now become internationally competitive. Examples are petrochemicals, steel, aluminium, paper and pulp and cement.

The rest of manufacturing has by and large stagnated, although there has been some improvement since 2003. This coincides with growth in the public capital expenditure led by improvements in sectors such as metals fabrication and capital equipment.

Employment

In the recent years formal employment growth has come predominately for the services sector, particularly in the wholesale and retail, and business services sectors. However, these employment gains are currently precarious. Wholesale and retail employment growth has been a consequence of massive and unsustainable private credit extension, leading to a widening current account deficit. Business services employment growth has been driven predominantly by two fac-

tors: the outsourcing of activities such as logistics and catering; and the growth in the private security sector. The unsustainable dependence of retail and wholesale employment growth on private credit extension rather than income growth in productive sectors has been demonstrated by the large reduction of employment in this sector. This resulted from the collapse of private credit extension as a consequence of the economic crisis. Therefore long-term increases in employment – in all sectors of the economy – need to be underpinned by higher growth in the production sectors of the economy, led by manufacturing.

Low relative profitability of manufacturing

There has been an observation that high unemployment was due to low growth investment in tradable sectors outside mining and agriculture. Specially, with the key problem being low profitability of manufacturing compared to sectors such as finance. Low profitability has resulted from key factors:

- An exchange rate that is volatile and generally over-valued;

- The high cost and limited allocation of capital to productive sectors, particularly the relatively more labour-intensive and value adding sectors of the economy;

- Failure to adequately exploit domestic supply opportunities of the public capital expenditure programme, other large public 'fleet' expenditure, and private procurement expenditure;

- The monopolistic provision and pricing of key input into manufacturing and other productive processes, and concentrated purchasing power of outputs of the sectors;

- A weak skills system, which does not adequately respond to the needs of productive sectors;

- Aged, unreliable expensive rail and ports systems; and

- Further, imminent electrical price increases will also adversely affect the production side of the economy.

This leads to an even further analysis of what has been the cost allocation of capital and procurement.

Cost allocation of capital

South Africa's financial sector has experienced dramatic growth since 1994, increasing its share of GDP from 6% to 13% between 2004 and 2008 alone. This has been driven by massive growth in the extension of private credit. Despite this, investment and savings rates have been mediocre over the most of post-apartheid period. Only a very small proportion of



IPAP 2 aims to halt the decline in South African industry and manufacturing

private credit is being extended to fixed investment – a mere ,2% in 2008. Fixed investment rates have recently improved, driven by raising public investment expenditure. But saving rates remain low.

In manufacturing, the cost of capital is higher here than in many of its many trading partners due to subsidies and subsidised credit through development banks and export credit banks and agencies.

Private investment has been predominantly concentrated in debt-driven consumption sectors such as finance, wholesale and retail.

Lastly, investments in the productive sectors have themselves been concentrated in capital-intensive mineral-and-energy sectors such as mining, cement and chemicals. With the exception of the auto industry, most relative labour-intensive and value-adding productive sectors have experienced low – and sometimes falling – rates of investment.

Failure to promote procurement

Public infrastructure investment has been a key driver of recently improved investment rates. Public investment of R404-billion was attracted from 2006 to 2009, rising to R78- billion in 2009-2012.

However, much of the tradable content of public infrastructure investment and

other large components of public procurement – are being imported. This has both micro- and macro-economic consequences. At the micro-economic level, the failure to adequately promote public procurement represents a huge lost opportunity to resuscitate key sectors of the economy, raise their competitiveness and reposition them as exporting sectors in the future. At the macro-economic level, high levels of imports have increased the current-account deficit, which can lead to balance-of-payments problems and thus threaten the sustainability of the capital Public procurement – within both government and the SOEs – currently suffers from a number of deficiencies.

● First, a number of large, outgoing procurement processes are conducted more in short-term ad hoc basis than a long-term strategic basis. There is a generally no long-term procurement plan in

place that identifies the need of repeat purchases of systems or components, opportunities for standardisation, optimal procurement size, opportunities for domestic localisation and competitive supplier development.

● Second, the legislative framework for procurement lacks focus and is outdated and fragmented. Different rules apply among the three spheres of government and SOEs. There is currently little alignment with key objectives such as industrial policy imperatives and, to a lesser extent, broad-based black economic empowerment (BBBEE). There is no alignment between the industrial financing and public procurement.

Ultimately, IPAP 2 is premised on the principle of ‘learning by doing’. It will be subject of continuous monitoring and evaluation and the taken forward and implemented in strengthened consultation, engagement and implementation by the government and its social partners, labour and business. In this way over the current MTEF period it can be used as an anchor on which strong partnerships for industrial development and economic growth can be built and strengthened. ●

Cde Thomo is a YCLSA National Committee member

Most labour-intensive sectors have experienced low investment



The outgoing National Committee at its first meeting following the 2007 Durban National Congress.

YCL by the numbers

2003: The year in which the YCL was re-established at the Vaal Congress, from 12-14 December. This year, the re-established organisation will be seven years old. The YCL was actually established on 25 May 1922 – it celebrated its 88th Anniversary this year.

2 200: The number of delegates to this Congress, the highest ever in the history of the YCL. Of these, 2 034 will be voting delegates from branches in good standing. Delegations will be made up of two delegates per branch, two delegates per district, five delegates per province and the 18 provincial chairpersons and secretaries together with the 35 National Committee members.

500: The number of delegates to the Vaal Congress. Each province sent 50 delegates. At the time, the membership of the YCL was just above 2 000.

955: The number of branches in good standing. At the last Congress, held in Durban, there were 605 branches. The total number of branches of the YCL throughout the country are 1 278. Part of the discussions at this Congress is to create voting district-based branches and sub-districts to ensure effective co-ordination and

to align YCL branches with those of the SACP.

53 794: Number of members of the YCL at the time of the National Congress audit – also the highest since the formation of the YCL. At the last Congress the membership was just above 33 000. This makes the YCL the second largest youth political formation in the country. The last Congress, set a target of 100 000 members. This has not been achieved. Of all the provinces, only Limpopo and Western Cape had achieved their set target of membership.

35: The number of National Committee members to be elected at this 3rd National Congress. There are no proposals to amend the constitution to increase the number. In that case, the number of NWC members will, on election, remain at 11. This number is set so that the number of NWC members should just be below a simple majority of the National Committee.

14: The age at which a young person can join the YCL.

35: The age at which a young person ceases to qualify for membership. The age range 14-35 also defines the official age of a young person in South Africa. ●



DISCUSSION PAPER

Capitalism's crisis and alternatives for the left

Left forces must see to it that education breaks with the dictates of the market and the neo-liberal agenda

While the neo-liberal globally is on the offensive, the structural deformity and speculative nature of its current capitalist system of production has once again been exposed – it is unsustainable and incapable of meeting the aspirations of humankind domestically and globally: instead fact it only brings misery to the majority of the population.

After the recent capitalist crisis, sufficient consensus has been built even among dominant market fundamentalist that the state cannot afford to be a spectator in the economy of any country but for them this is only done as far as it serves their selfish interest of minimizing expenses of doing business.

Alternative forms of collective or community ownership must be explored.

The National Congress discussion paper, Capitalism's crisis and alternatives for the left, points out that recovery of the South Africa economy further strengthens the point that we require a new growth path. This new growth path must have as its foundations:

- Job creation;
- An activist developmental state that seeks to decisively intervene in the economy for and behalf of the poor;
- Stricter monetary control measures that monitor the financial sector; balance of payments and imports; and strengthen South to South dialogue;
- Transformation of international financial institutions and consolidation of global movement of progressive forces; and
- Stricter control of money exchange from one country to another.

The paper argues that for a strategic and deliberate departure from the neo-liberalism nurtured by previous regime.

The paper also argues for strong opposition to the youth subsidy scheme.

It notes that with interest that the sectors worst hit by capitalism's crisis were those most integrated into the global economy – and thus most vulnerable to fluctuations in global markets. Thus in the crisis was felt strongly in the manufacturing sector, and particularly in those subsectors sensitive to the business cycle: basic iron and steel; motor vehicles; parts and accessories as well as petroleum, chemical and rubber products.

It compares these to those sectors at the time more reliant on the local economy; these proved resilient – as shown by the construction sector, which was only slightly affected by capitalism's meltdown.

It must be the responsibility of left forces to see to it that education breaks with the dictates of the market and the dominance of the neo-liberal agenda. In basic education for the school system to function adequately, teachers and pupils must be in school seven hours a day, engaged in a culture of learning and teaching, books and laboratories must be in place in place, governance structures must be functional, school transport and nutrition must be in order: schools must function properly.

The paper argues for the centrality of

FETs must be re-orientated to produce skilled workers and artisans

developing capacity and skills: it argues that further education and training (FET) colleges must be re-orientated to focus on producing of skilled workers and artisans who are competent and qualified. South Africa is challenged by the unavailability of artisans and a skilled labour force – the vast majority of qualified artisans are ageing white males.

The paper argues that if the skills revolution is to be taken serious we must reconfigure the role and content of the sector education and training authorities (Setas). The re-location in 2009 under the Department of Higher Education and Training (HET) should emphasise their training role, in which in-house capacity-building in factories must be encouraged

Equally, HET must be focused on the creation of developmental and activist universities. Fort Hare and WSU must be the catalysts for research and knowledge on agrarian reform, agriculture and rural development, while NMMU must lead on industrialisation and expansion of the Coega industrial development zone.

The paper also underlines the falsehood of a 'unipolar world' under the strategic economic lead of the USA and Great Britain: overwhelming evidence shows that China, India and Brazil have taken the lead. We must intensify regional integration – reinforced south-to-south dialogue offers the opportunity to create a powerful, alternative, progressive outlook.

It stresses that the path for the working class to consolidate power is not through of sweet-heartening the capitalist class. For power relations in society reflect the centrality of the working class requires radical mass-based campaigning and a Party that raises levels of consciousness in society. Lenin tells us that no class that has ever bowed off the stage gracefully. ●



DISCUSSION PAPER

Transforming property relations in South Africa

Strategic nationalisation – restoring ownership and control of the means of production to the people as a whole

This is a summary of the Congress discussion paper, Transformation of property relations in South Africa, through which we seek to initiate a radical programme to transfer ownership and control of wealth and productive capacity to the people as a whole.

This summary does not include all the analyses, strategic objectives and proposals that we are making in the Transformation of property relations in South Africa: reading that paper itself is highly recommended. The purpose of this summary is only to highlight selected proposals.

In Transformation of property relations in South Africa our main focus is the principal contradiction of the South African society. Means of production in South Africa are owned and controlled by a tiny minority constituted mainly by individuals from the white national group, and who are mainly males.

After the post-1994 democratic transition, there has been a steady rise of a few individuals, most of whom politically connected, from among the historically oppressed to join in the exploitation of the masses through access to ownership structures.

Also driven through politics and policies of black economic empowerment (BEE), which remains largely narrow and elitist in both nature and character, this phenomenal development has in achieved dominance over our strategic goal to restore the wealth and heritage of South Africa to the people as a whole. The post-1994 focus in economic policy on individuals as opposed to the people as whole has a negative impact on our economic transformation and development agenda. In the process, South Africa

has just within 16 years of its democratic dispensation parachuted to become the most unequal society on earth. Historical injustices in property relations, economic production and social development remain largely intact.

The overwhelming majority of the people of South Africa have historically been expropriated through colonisation, imperialism and apartheid. This process of expropriation, which we call the 'great historical injustice', has contributed greatly in forcefully establishing capitalist property relations and mode of production. That viciously violent and bloody process has largely taken place through wars of conquest and dispossession, national oppression and gender domination.

Once capitalist private property was universally established with law and the rule of law determined from its premise, expropriation of the proletarianised overwhelming majority (the working class) by a tiny minority (the capitalist class) was to be reproduced through economic exploitation. As a result of the historical expropriation, the overwhelming majority of South Africans have no means of production of their own but are forced to rely on selling their labour-power to live. The overwhelming majority can only find work as long as their labour increases capital, which the tiny minority that owns and controls the means of production privately accumulates.

It is in the context of this briefly sketched background that South Africa has undergone the creation and reproduction of inequality, poverty and a large army of industrially unemployed people, and the structure of its economic production was distorted. South Africa is entangled in a contradiction involv-

ing, on the one hand, the availability of a vast wealth of mineral and other natural resources and, on the other hand, the predominance of extraction and export of those resources largely as raw materials to other economies rather than being used to develop and expand manufacturing and thereby to increase access to productive work and the meet material and cultural needs of the people.

By 'transformation of property relations' we refer to our proposed programme to alter and restore ownership and control of means of production in our economy from a tiny minority to the people as whole. We emphasise two policy approaches that the SACP has over the years brought to the front: the expansion of the public sector, through state ownership and democratic control; and socialisation at least through the development and expansion of co-operatives across all sectors of our economy. Our programmatic approach looks at the economy as a whole rather than focusing on a single sector. We call for emphasis on strategic areas in every sector, although the paper does not deal exhaustively with each sector.

Our proposed programme calls for a strategy to rigorously develop and increase productive forces without which we believe there would be a disaster. We define productive forces as the unity of means of production and labour-power required to carry out economic production in a well-balanced mining-industrial-agriculture-service economy. We make several other proposals on how South Africa can develop and increase productive forces. This includes a proposal for new approaches to training and skills development, knowledge production and education in terms of which we call for,



continued expansion to access and an end to elitist approaches to post-graduate education and training, and curriculum transformation.

Since the 1994 democratic breakthrough land reform programmes have failed to reach their targets. Capitalist private land ownership has been entrenched in the midst of a growing mass of landless and homeless people to the extent that human settlement through the provision of housing has severely been constrained. Food production to boost the achievement of sustainable livelihood is lacking and commercial agriculture and farming are the order of the day. Moreover, environmental and water pollution is escalating from liberal approaches and inorganic methods of production in mining, manufacturing, farming and agriculture.

We call for a radical move to make South Africa belong to all who live in it in reality rather than in the abstract. We believe that the nationalisation of all capitalist privately owned land will contribute positively towards achieving that goal. In addition, we want the state and society to ensure that land is used productively. On the part of the state, we want support to include materials support in line with the Freedom Charter, education and training interventions. Democratic control and policies driven by social mobilisation must be intensified to regulate land use in all categories of production, human settlement, manufacturing, agriculture, farming, fishing and mining – which is by the way one of the leading if not the leading environmental polluter in our country.

We propose that the land question must be seen central in our industrial policy in order to ensure a balanced mining-agriculture-manufacturing economy and independence of a people of South Africa. This must include measures to develop, expand and diversify agro-processing. We also propose that must be part of our rural development strategy and among others involve a coordinated inter-governmental action by the Departments of Rural Development; Trade and Industry; Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; and Water Affairs.

Strategic nationalisation

By strategic nationalisation we mean a strategically guided nationalisation programme that is informed by a concrete analysis including cost-benefit analysis in class terms. We believe that such a programme can only be guided by the

strategic objective to achieve the immediate aims and enforce the momentary interests of the overwhelming majority of our people, i.e. the working class, and advance their long-term goals as opposed to “nationalisation” to benefit the capitalist class and factionalise our movement as called for by other actors.

Strategic nationalisation is therefore underpinned first by the principle and strategic objective of ensuring that no capitalist achieves a bailout or pulls out any gain when transfer of means of production from the capitalist class to the people is implemented. Strategic nationalisation is not an end in itself. It is rather but one of the means to an end that encompasses our overarching strategic objective to eliminate economic exploitation and inequality; advance redistribution of productive resources, the means to support human life and power; press for industrialisation; and ultimately lead to socialisation.

As such, strategic nationalisation cannot be limited to a single sector but properly looks at all sectors with a systematic approach to building and expanding state ownership rather than a fragmented, demagogic approach.

The paper discusses what must be done in terms of compensation when strategic nationalisation is implemented. We reaffirm our ultimate policy goal: to expropriate the expropriators – the capitalist class. From a concrete analysis of capitalist production we conclude that capitalists do not necessarily deserve compensation and that if any compensation is deserved it is due to the workers who are exploited and out of whom surplus-value is extracted.

We consider the present provisions of the Constitution on the property question to be a ‘great sunset compromise’ which must not be allowed to hold back our revolution. The provisions must be amended. This must include scrapping the so-called willing seller-willing buyer and rolling back the associated market

mechanism. If any compromise compensation is to be considered for a capitalist, it must be both positive and negative: the difference between, for instance, the money-capital that capitalist advanced into the particular production process and, in historical terms, the surplus-value that capitalist would be found to have extracted from the exploitation of labour.

Expanding state ownership and democratic control

We propose that the SOE sector must be developed further and expanded. This must involve the expansion of existing SOEs and the creation of new SOEs across the economy. We suggest that this must be guided by a thoroughgoing audit of strategic areas of operation and assets across all sectors of our economy and that this approach must be streamlined as part of our industrial policy.

The paper gives an example – given the need to intensify and win the battle against HIV-Aids and other health conditions including chronic diseases, build effectively proactive and responsive healthcare system – of the need to build a state-owned pharmaceutical company. As part of this strategic approach, we reaffirm the direction by the Freedom Charter’s and SACP’s (1962) Road to South African Freedom that all monopoly industry must be transferred to the ownership and control of the people as a whole. We also put forward the following areas for the building of state ownership and increasing democratic control, in terms of the Freedom Charter, to ensure the wellbeing of all the people.

Heavy industry, machine tool building and fuel production

In line with the Road to South African Freedom, and as further advanced through the resolutions of SACP 12th National Congress, we identify this area as strategic. This area consists of some sort of monopoly. It is in this area where the likes of Sasol and ArcelorMittal are located. The SACP supported by the YCL resolved that both Sasol and ArcelorMittal must be re-nationalised. We reaffirm this resolution and call for rigorous action to implementation.

We note that both Sasol and ArcelorMittal have been involved in the practices of Import Parity Pricing and international-market pricing models to the detriment of the development of downstream manufacturing and employment creation in our economy. We also call on

The Constitution must be amended to scrap the ‘willing buyer-willing seller’ provision



state intervention to bring such practices to an end across our economy.

The mining industry

As in other sectors, our approach on building and expanding state ownership and democratic control in this sector comprises two pillars: strategic nationalisation and the creation of new state owned enterprise.

One of the central tenets of what we mean by strategic nationalisation in the mining sector is a proper assessment, economically, politically and in terms of the resulting social outcome, of all our mineral and petroleum resources and a clear identification of what is strategic. We propose that the point must not necessarily be to continue extraction for revenue generation from trade, but also to drive the expansion of local manufacturing of finished products.

We propose that in the event strategic nationalisation and the creation of a state consolidated mining enterprise are not taken to their logical conclusion, the state must rigorously increase democratic control over mineral and petroleum resources. That requires confronting the profit motive head on. In so doing, thoroughgoing taxes, levies and royalties must be imposed. The fact that the mineral and petroleum resources of South Africa belong to all who live in it must reign supreme and not be allowed to be subordinated to the profit motive.

As part of our programme in the mining sector, the weaknesses of the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act (MPRDA) are corrected. Where necessary that must involve new amendments or supplementary regulations. As part of this, we want BEE equity requirements on state ownership to be scrapped. We believe that should illustrate our seriousness to return the wealth and heritage of South Africa to the people as whole and, as the ANC (1967) Morogoro Conference Strategy and Tactics declares, to make sure that the resources of our country are not manipulated by any elite be it white or black.

We also propose that the state must increase its role on trade in mineral and petroleum resources. The experiences of the Organisation for Petroleum Exporting Countries must be studied carefully. To that extent for instance, the SACP proposes the establishment of an international platinum cartel in the context where South Africa holds 90% of the world's platinum reserves. We believe

We want a state bank, not operated for profit but to meet development needs

that the SACP's proposal is worth engineering and considering.

Banks and the financial sector in general

In this sector our 3rd National Congress is called upon to identify measures by which the YCL will pass over its support for the nationalisation of the Reserve Bank of South Africa into thoroughgoing working class mobilisation. We believe that it is utterly inconceivable that even after 16 years of a democratic dispensation such a strategic asset of our society still consists of capitalist private ownership.

We believe that the RBSA is not independent for so long as it consists of private ownership and continues to pursue neo-liberal policies that are imposed by undemocratic supranational institutions such as the International Monetary Fund throughout the world.

We regard the RBSA as not only an important policy institution for developmental purposes, but also as making money available to commercial banks at a low lending rate. We note with concern that what the commercial banks do is simply add more interest rates. As part of this, compound interest rates are charged on housing, thereby making access to decent houses prohibitive. We want this to be reviewed.

In Transformation of property relations we point out that there is no progress since 1994 to transfer banks to the ownership and control of the people but that instead there has been a movement to a opposite direction. There has been external takeover in some of the "South African" banks. This is not inconsiderable – for instance in Standard Bank's restructuring campaign to cut down more than 1 000 jobs, not because it does not make profit, but because its investors want more profit than it is presently making.

We note that since 1994, under the

1996 Class Project, and even now under the Polokwane administration as it is evident from Pravin Gordhan (27 October 2010), there is consistency to advance financial and capital liberalisation instead of implementing democratic control. The capital and finance liberalisation trend must also be confronted head on. Democratic and effective financial sector and capital regulations must be adopted to boost capacity to meet developmental imperatives. This must include rigorous taxation, finance and capital controls over non-state owned banks, other finance institutions and capital transactions in particular hot money.

Also, we are not content that the state lacks presence in the bank sector although it has Development Finance Institutions. We call on this to be reviewed with a strong focus on both state ownership and co-operatives.

It is as such that we propose that over and above tackling the issue of the Reserve Bank we must press for the building of state presence in the banks sector. We want this to include a state bank that is not operated according to the dictates of the profit motive but according to a drive to meet developmental and service delivery objectives. Our ultimate policy goal in this regard is to centralise credit in the hands of the working class state, which we are struggling to achieve through our struggle for socialism. But until then we propose that the state owned bank that we are proposing must deliberately be used to undermine the high cost of banking, access to capital and financial which is imposed willy-nilly by commercial banks.

Building a strong co-operative movement

Our approach to transforming property relations can never make sense without developing and expanding the co-operative movement to assert direct worker ownership in all sectors of our economy. Building a vibrant co-operative sector is one of the most important steps in confronting economic exploitation, and empowering the masses of the people economically and, therefore, socially and politically. Our resolutions on this important strategic objective are well known. In this regard our 3rd National Congress is called upon to develop a detailed strategic approach to implementing co-operatives. That approach, it is proposed, must include a critical examination of state support to co-operatives and propose measures by which that can be improved. ●



DISCUSSION PAPER

Social transformation: A YCL perspective of socio- economic inequalities

Plans for social transformation are meaningless if they're disconnected from the struggle against capitalism

It is impossible to conceive of any left perspective on social transformation that is devoid of recognition of a society's class character from which social relations, as they are, stems.

We proceed from the premise that fundamentally, the spasmodic unequal social development is underpinned by the extent to which capitalist development in our country has obtained; and that as we grapple with issues of social redress and social transformation, these in final analysis would be effectively realised in totality, under socialism.

In the present, all that we seek to achieve will always be minimum gains owing to the contested nature of social relations in the axis of classes ranged against each other.

Social patterns and social physiology in South Africa are such that they are structured, organised and maintained along the lines as to strengthen the holding hand of the status quo. Any theorisation on social relations has to have elements of a trajectory that seeks, in the long run, to debunk the existing social relation in correspondence with the economic relations as a framework to which we exist and operate.

Again, the point of departure is that the YCL branch must be of a special kind anywhere it exists.

It must at all times seek to unravel social ills through active campaigns and a direct grappling with the sorry conditions within which a community finds itself. In essence, the YCL must be the agent

of social transformation. It is a task that it cannot devolve to any other political structure.

Social challenges raised in this short document must mean that the YCL is called upon to assume leadership in raising those or untangling them whether in concert with other progressive social forces or the alliance formations including the SACP.

When there is any social malaise in society, youth becomes the hardest hit section of the population.

We cannot afford a hermetically sealed approach on social transformation to only narrowly be the champions the plight of the youth at the expense of the broader society.

The paper first, raises the connection between unequal social relations and the fact that any theorisation of social transformation would be lip service if it is disconnected to the struggle against capitalism.

An analysis of poverty patterns and the state as having cushioned many poor South Africans through social grants – about 14 million receive these grants; without them they would have been in unimaginable social morass. Deepening the poverty matrix is the question of HIV-Aids that is ravaging society and leaving many orphan babies for government and NGOs to care for.

Unemployment is deepening this reality of poverty. Proposed interventions to mitigate the effects of unemployment from the current 25,5% through options

such as the cooperative movement, green jobs, learnerships through Seta targeting the graduates as a bridge to full employment.

Education, particularly at school level. The issue of resource disparities from the rural or township schools and former model C schools must urgently be addressed. These disparities inform the result variations in matric and ultimately shape the players in the economy in terms of race.

Dealing with crime through building of organs of people's power such as street committees, community policing forums etc. But these structures must be linked to a "know your neighbourhood campaign" where social issues beyond criminality would be championed.

Our branches must be the pulse of the community, and the real agents of social transformation. This means our branches must appreciate all challenges that the community finds itself in and they must find solutions to those.

Dealing with the mentality of crass materialism and the consumerist culture that is finding its place in our society. This has a lot to do with our strong connection to the global imperialist culture that emphasises individuality over a collective. This culture places premium on the individual affluence as an important status in society above a value system of sharing and caring. Of course this represents a new dimension to class society in a more pronounced way where everyone is for him- or herself. ●



CONGRESS PROPOSAL

10 Youth demands for 2013

Towards total achievement of 2015 Millennium Development Goals

1. Halving youth unemployment and poverty within the next three years by strengthening the state at all levels, and ensuring that the private sector commits to a certain percentage of employment and skills development;
2. Training of more than 100 000 artisans by the state and another 50 000 by the private sector within the next three years, strengthening the capacity of FET institutions and ensuring that there are Universities in Mpumalanga and Northern Cape;
3. Creating and supporting more 10 000 youth co-operatives and SMMEs within the next three years;
4. Wiping out squatter camps all over the country within the next three years;
5. Realising the objective of one doctor per 50 patients and 1 teacher per 35 learners within the next 10 years;
6. Reducing the ratio between policing and the population within the next three years;
7. Improving the health and education infrastructure within the next three years;
8. Building water infrastructure for water security, protecting the environments and improving the road and transport networks, within the next three years;
9. Realising a 60% land redistribution within the next three years;
10. Improving the state and company pension schemes in order to encourage early retirement (of 55 for women and 60 for men) within the next three years. ●



JOIN THE DEBATE

Send your contributions to Umsebenzi
Email malesela@sacp.org.za or write to:
PO Box 1027 Johannesburg 2000



ADOPTED AT THE 2003 RE-ESTABLISHMENT CONGRESS

Manifesto of the YCL

*The future belongs to us: Crush capitalism, build socialism!
Young men and women of South Africa arise!*

1. Preamble

We, the young people of South Africa who believe in communism as the most liberatory cause for humankind, under the banner of the Young Communist League of South Africa, re-established on 12 December 2003 in Vanderbijlpark, in Gauteng Province, hereby declare for our country and the world to know:

That capitalism, which is the most dominant system in the world, continues to be the most unequal social system of modern society. In its current world economic formation capitalism does not only widen further the gap between the rich and the poor within and among countries of the world, but continuously reproduces poverty for the majority of mankind, and yet large volumes of wealth for the few. The development of the productive forces in the form of advanced scientific and technological amenities, which could be used in finding solutions for problems that beset mankind, is not used for the good of mankind, but, instead, for the extraction of more profits by the monopoly capital. Never has the world witnessed the accumulation of such huge volumes of wealth, as it is the case presently.

The most basic contradiction of the capitalist mode of production continues to be between labour and capital. The socialisation of production on one hand and the concentration of means of pro-

The YCLSA was established on 25 May 1922 but banned with the parent body. This manifesto was adopted when the YCLSA was re-established on 14 December 2003

duction and wealth in gradually fewer private hands are at a higher level than ever. The profit motive is the driving rule of capitalism, and exploitation and the impoverishment of the working class and is the resultant effect. Economic production is not designed to meeting social needs of the people, but it is for maximisation of profits.

That the global institutions, UN, World Bank, IMF and WTO, have been greatly shaped and influenced by the (capitalist) interests of the powerful developed North. Whilst the underdeveloped countries of the South are put at the receiving end of the neo-liberal policies. In the recent past imperialist aggressiveness has grown in all sectors: the economy, working relations, social policy, the political

system, ideology and culture. Thus the world has witnessed the toll in the implementation of US led imperialist policies, of aggressive militarism, unilateralism and regime changes. All in the name of strengthening the hold of the capitalist forces over the globe.

South Africa remains, essentially, a capitalist society, characterised by the legacy of more than three centuries of colonial and apartheid rule, which continues to define the living conditions of the poor black masses and the working class. The capitalist accumulation regime that continues to be underway in our country is responsible for the further reproduction of social inequalities and poverty for the wretched. This is despite the progressive changes that have been introduced by our ANC Government since the historic 1994 April democratic breakthrough. The ANC Government has, in the past 10 years, promulgated and implemented a progressive constitutional and social policy regime on areas such as social security, labour laws and basic services.

Young men and women continue to bear the brunt of such social ills as mass unemployment and poverty, lack of access to education and training, communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS, and other social phenomena of misery arising from underdevelopment. It is our deep conviction that capitalism does not have sustainable solutions to social prob-



lems facing the working class youth.

We shall therefore strive for a socialist, and classless, communist society, in which the ideals and needs of our young people shall be fully realised as we define hereunder;

2. Our approach towards and vision of socialism

The most basic contradiction in society is the class struggle. The class formation and the class struggle owe their existence to the private ownership of the means of production. A socialist revolution, therefore, differs from all other revolutions in world history as it sets out to abolish private ownership of the means of production and all forms of oppression. The systems of slavery, feudalism and capitalism are all based on the private ownership of the means of production, and on oppression and exploitation of one class by another.

Thus, capitalist relations of production developed even before the bourgeoisie had achieved political power. But the development of socialist relations, which will bring an end to the system of economic exploitation, cannot begin until the working class and its allies have won political power. While the material basis for socialism is created by capitalism itself, socialist relations of production are realised only after a political revolution.

The fundamental question of any socialist revolution is the winning of political power by the working class, in alliance with other progressive forces among the people. The working class then sets out to eliminate private property and exploitation by achieving public ownership and democratic control of the means of

The NDR is the most direct route to socialism in SA's concrete conditions

production. Thus it (the working class) distributes the power it has won to the rest of society until it ceases to be a ruling class itself, as a classless, communist society gets established.

Socialism is a transitional social system between capitalism and a fully classless, communist society. The socialist transition may well be of long duration. The transition may also be marked by contradictions, stagnation and major reverses. History is never a smooth process, nor does it have a guaranteed outcome.

Socialism is essentially about working class hegemony, and it is characterised by four core features:

- Democracy,
- Equality,
- Freedom, and
- The socialisation of the predominant part of the economy.

Each of these core features is important, and they are all interrelated and interdependent. The slogan; "Socialism is the future, build it now!" captures the programmatic perspectives of the South African Communist Party (SACP), our Political Party, in the most accurate and imaginative way. We believe the struggle for socialism is more relevant than ever, and that there is no Chinese wall between consolidating the National

Democratic Revolution and at the same time struggling for socialism. We shall work tirelessly to build elements and consciousness of, and the momentum towards socialism today.

We shall therefore mobilise, educate and organise young people against the system of capitalism and behind the socialist vision of the SACP. The attainment of socialism must lead to an uninterrupted movement towards a classless, communist society.

3. Consolidating and Deepening the National Democratic Revolution: Forward to the second decade of freedom!

The National Democratic Revolution (NDR), whose strategic objective continues to be the creation of a truly non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous South Africa, is the most direct route to socialism under the concrete conditions of our country. The Freedom Charter continues to be the basic summary of the national democratic goals. And the Reconstruction and Development Programme are a programmatic concretisation and elaboration of the Freedom Charter.

The working class, because of its (social) location at production sites, numbers and organisation, and since it stand to benefit from the success of the NDR, is the most resolute and capable class to can lead the democratic revolution to its logical conclusion. The class interests and the leadership of the working class should always be safeguarded and advanced in both theoretical and practical terms in and for the NDR.

It is partly the working class bias and leadership that makes the NDR not only

Umsebenzi

EDITORIAL BOARD

Blade Nzimande (Editor-in-chief)
Jeremy Cronin (Deputy Editor-in-chief)
Yunus Carrim (Editor)

Joyce Moloi-Moropa
Solly Mapaila
Buti Manamela
Chris Matlhako
Malesela Maleka
Gugu Ndima
David Niddrie



(dialectically) linked to socialism, but also an integral part of building socialism in South Africa.

The black young men and women have borne the brunt of apartheid policies and rule. The eradication of the legacy of apartheid will go a long way in ending the misery of black youth. A sustainable development of youth is not possible under capitalism, thus a socialist society will usher in a social system in which the interests and ideals of young people shall be fully realised.

The relationship between the struggle for socialism and the NDR is that of a relationship between the national and class questions as they interplay in our South African social reality: the connection between the national oppression and class (economic) exploitation. It is a relationship of the immediate and the longer-term interests of the working class.

The NDR brings to its fold a broad variety of class forces, some with even class interests not only different, but also contradictory (the working class and the emerging black bourgeoisie for instance), the working class bias and leadership is, therefore, not anything to be taken for granted, particularly by communists. The leadership of, and bias towards the working class should equally not be to the detriment of the unity of the national democratic revolutionary forces. The character of any revolution is

determined by objective realities and not by the wishes of individuals or parties. In our situation, the unity-in-action of the formerly oppressed and democratic forces around the basic national democratic goals constitutes the most powerful revolutionary weapon against monopoly capitalist class.

The final attainment of the strategic objectives of the NDR unite the overwhelming majority of strata and sectors of the formerly oppressed: black workers, the landless rural masses, the intelligentsia, cultural workers, sections of black business, youth, women, religious communities, sports people and others. The success of the NDR is also in the long-term interest of white workers, small farmers and middle strata who, together, make up the bulk of the white population.

The stranglehold of a small number of white monopoly capitalists over the great bulk of our country's wealth and resources is based on colonial dispossession and reproduces racial underdevelopment. This concentration of wealth and power perpetuates the super-exploitation of millions of black workers. It perpetuates the separate plight of millions of the landless rural poor. And it blocks the advance of black business and other sectors of the oppressed. This reality, therefore, forms the basis of the anti-monopoly content of the national

democratic programme.

The NDR is therefore not only uncomfortable about capitalism, but also anti-capitalism, although not in the most fundamental way of radically reconstituting society along new class lines.

In our conditions in which the legacy of national oppression and economic exploitation are inextricably linked, there can, at the end of the day, be no fundamental liberation without full economic emancipation; without the advance to a socialist and communist future. To achieve this, the South African working class - and black workers in particular - must play a leading and hegemonic role in the NDR.

The principal strategic contradiction of the current phase of the NDR lies in the fact that social progress as being advanced by the ANC Government, since 1994, continues to be circumscribed and contraindicated by the capitalist accumulation regime, that continues to be underway in our country, and reinforced by the hostile global capitalism. We shall therefore, in theory articulate and elaborate, and in practice strive for the consolidation and deepening of the democratic gains, for a rapid advance towards socialism and ultimately; communism. ●

**Crush capitalism, build socialism!
Young men and women of South Africa arise!**



The African Communist

ISSUE 182 4TH QUARTER 2010

**SPECIAL ISSUE - AFRICA LEFT NETWORK
FORUM CONFERENCE / PARTICIPATORY
DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA CONFERENCE**

Reports on the status of Left formations in: Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, DRC, Zambia, Lesotho, Swaziland, Chad and Namibia





SOCIALISM IN OUR LIFETIME

21st century socialism – A vision for South African youth

We must promote the solidarity and caring nature of stokvels to challenge the capitalist culture of greed and individualism

We have to contest space for the youth. We have to win their minds and hearts behind the ideals of socialism. It is a reality that existing mediums of communication and propaganda are heavily dependent on and are the mouthpiece of capitalist institutions.

Their role is to ensure that they sustain and justify the continued existence of the capitalist mode of production. In as much as we should smash these forms of undemocratic, bourgeois institutions, we should also create parallel and democratic, accessible forms of propaganda that appeals to young people and that pursues the agenda of an alternative form of society.

We cannot rely on existing institutions to reproduce the ideas of the working class, especially to the youth.

Thus, some of the publications of the YCL and our propaganda work, should remain independent and popular among the working class youth as a form of undistorted reproduction of analysis and guide to action in defeating the capitalist class.

There are a whole range of ideas that we need to pursue, including messages about the form of revolutionary culture and ideology as the foundation of working class hegemony. We can and should contest the ideological space opened up by a democratic dispensation which encourages capitalist greed and consumerism as the kind of dogma that wins the day.

Socialism and the economy

Within the economy, we have to make an assessment of the developments that took place since 1994 and how all of these have entrenched the same foundation that Apartheid SA was based on. Some of the key economic activities that the Party is advocating for included communal forms of the financial sector, which are embedded on the township economy of co-operation and socialisation.

The stokvels and burial societies are but one form of these activities which we need to promote. Their democratic, solidarity and caring nature are the parallel values and principles that we need to foster in order to challenge the capitalist culture and social relations of selfishness, individualism and accumulation. They constitute a key lesson for the working class that there is a different form of social relations other than that permeated and propagated through the factory floors and on the mainstream media.

Of course at the heart of smashing capitalism and capitalist social relations lies the struggle for altering the capitalist accumulation regime. This is the line

that lies between capitalism and socialism. One of the greatest fault-line in the post-apartheid capitalist path is the perpetuation of class and racial inequalities in the economy. The slums still belong to the blacks and the suburbs still belong to the whites (with a sprinkle of blacks). We have to change all of these. We have to change Alexandra and Sandton by making the former a better habitual settlement, and develop its economic and other institutions to the level of the latter. We have to narrow the gap between rich and poor in our society. This to be central in our mobilisation of youth on the basis of a radical NDR.

The other challenge that we need to fight against as the YCL is what has become generally the relationship between business and government, facilitated in a broker-fashion by what has become known as the tenderpreneurs. The weakness in this relationship is that it reduces black economic empowerment to those who facilitate business between what is mainly white business and government, instead of promoting entrepreneurs. There are young people all over the country who have ideas on a whole range of enterprise whose multiplier effects will include more jobs for in the economy. We hear daily of young people who invent cars or some kind of revolutionary initiatives, whose wonderful stories end up in the front-page of the *Daily Sun* or in the design's department of German car manufacturers. Why are we not supporting these? Imagine the prospects of having a South African car, and

The role of existing media is to justify the continued existence of capitalism



the multiplier effects that this will have from jobs created through beneficiation of our raw materials, the assembly of the car, the cost to the consumer and many other factors.

And, when government gives tenders to individuals, why not support these people to be business people, instead of allowing them to sell their contracts to the highest-bidder. Entrepreneurial initiatives should be at the heart of transforming our economy, truly empowering black people, creating jobs and growing the economy. If we do not fight the tendency of quick-buck capitalism, or capitalists without capital, we will be far off the mark of fighting white monopoly capitalism. In fact, those who accuse us of not fighting white monopoly capitalism are the ones who are entrenching it by promoting Broker Economic Empowerment, who sell their tenders to the highest bidding white monopoly capitalist. The campaign against corruption, as led by the SACP, has proven to be very popular among young people and therefore a task for the YCLSA to intensify.

Fighting corruption and the 'bling' culture

One of the dangers of this brokerage economic empowerment is its close linkage to corruption and greed. Because of its pursuit for quick-bucks, and absolutely no justification of capacity to deliver, tenderpreneurs are almost always quick to bribe the tender committee in exchange for the tender, and to pass over the tender to the highest bidder. This is not capitalism but parasitism. It does not contribute in any way to decent jobs, economic growth and in narrowing the gap between the rich and the poor as the same capitalists deducts the kick-back from the wages of workers. It brings into disrepute a credible economic empowerment programme in the form of BEE.

We should ask ourselves why the Auditor-General and the Anti-Corruption Unit claims that there are more than 4 000 government bureaucrats who are suspected of corruption, and the unit is overwhelmed with fighting corruption through legal technicalities. We should also ask ourselves how a government bureaucrat who should be earning not more than R20 000 can afford a luxury car, house and top-brands of champagne. Importantly, in exposing this and fighting corruption, we need to ensure that we restore a new, alternative and progressive revolutionary culture that is op-

Tenderpreneurs aren't capitalists, but parasites – we must oppose the quick-bucks creed

posed to consumerism, which rewards hard work, that shams corrupt individuals and isolate them, and that celebrates good entrepreneurial initiatives from young black South Africans.

What constitutes a "bling culture" in our country has also perpetuated other forms of violent crimes and theft from the public purse in pursuit of this lifestyle. As soon as we instil in our youth the spirit of opposition towards this culture, then the road ahead will be much easier, for it is within this generation that we must begin to plant the seeds of a new culture. The role of culture and breaking the back of revolutionary activity and deviating revolutionaries from the intended objective cannot be denied. And even more, the role of culture in fostering and sustaining any form of social relations remains key. Let's fight this capitalist culture by changing the capitalist mode of production.

Eco-socialism and the environment

One of the realities of 21st century capitalism as espoused by the Bolivarian revolution under Chavez is how it has managed to build itself on the complete destruction of the environment.

This has happened through industrialisation, war, internet technology and many other epochs of capitalist development. In fact, every epoch of capitalistic-

Bling culture in SA encourages other – more violent - crimes





production has been accompanied by the complete destruction of the environment. The strongest Western economies were built on the carcass of a destroyed Sub-Saharan environment. Even apartheid capitalism had to sustain itself through massive appropriation of raw materials into fossil energy such as oil and coal to develop electricity and gas.

With the pressures exerted on the global community by the recent financial crises, many economies will be forced to find ways in which they can create jobs and sustain their economy for the sake of immediate survival. Some of these interventions include sustaining the very same industries and lifestyles that will continue to destroy the eco-system and increase emissions of green-house gases. The issue of global warming is also a class issue in the context that in the process of accumulation, the capitalist class has not only exploited variable capital (labour), but also constant capital (in the form of raw materials, carbon emitting machinery and engines etc) and has disregarded this danger to humanity and abused the environment. The anarchy of capitalist production, for instance, determined through the whims of the markets, completely neglected the impact this will have on the environment.

The crises of overproduction has a relationship with global warming in that because production is chaotic and unplanned, capitalism sometimes produced more than what the market can consume and has thus led to literal dumping of certain products in order to stimulate demand and control prices.

This is a class issue also, as we have seen in Haiti, that when temperatures rise in certain regions of the world and cause hurricanes and earthquakes, it is mainly the working class and the poor who gets affected. In New Orleans, in Cuba, in Miami, in India, and even here in KwaZulu Natal where there are now occasional flooding, because of a whole range of factors; it is the working class that is affected. This means that issues such as climate change are not some white woman NGO or civil society based challenges but are challenges for working class organisations, especially the youth as this is their world in the now and in the future.

21st century socialism – learning from the Bolivarian revolution

Some of the facets of *our* socialism as propagated by the Party, and constitute what is usually referred to as traditional



President Hugo Chavez's Venezuela remains the hope of a transformed, democratic, non-bureaucratic form of socialism

practices and “ubuntu”, finds reflection in the 21st century socialism represented by the Bolivarian revolution. With all of these principles, Venezuela remains the special hope of a transformed, democratic and non-bureaucratic form of socialism and an example of removing the terrible perceptions of what socialism represents. We should mobilise the youth of our country behind these ideals.

We have to fight the dogmatic and propagandist ideological onslaught of capitalist that suggests that socialism is barbaric and has failed.

Or even worse, that socialism is an old, academic and euro-centric concept that came with the white man. Or that socialism is about the mass-murder of

people and suppression of democracy. Or that socialism is just but a dream and unrealisable, and that we are all naturally different and that poverty and unemployment is for the lazy and unlucky. Or that socialism is about the sharing of poverty while capitalism is about the sharing of wealth (and emphasise that capitalist do share wealth, but only among themselves).

We have to start with exposing the fact that we are in this nightmare because of the failure of capitalism. It will be our duty to expose the fact that corruption, greed, unemployment, poverty, exploitation, discrimination, racism, sexism, dispossession, unnecessary wars, debt, the financial crises, and destruction of the eco-system are all the results the failures of a capitalist system. We should say that when the capitalist say things will get better, they actually mean better for themselves, and not for all. And that when governments say they are bailing the nation out of the financial crises, only one-tenth of that bail-out may actually reach the working class and the poor. There is no other future but socialism.

Socialism in our lifetime! ●

**Yes, we recognise
that capitalists do
share wealth – but only
among themselves**



BEE

Fronting is the norm in South African business

Cde Davies's criticism of BEE rating agencies is welcome – now it's time for the government to take over status verification

BY GUGU NDIMA



Trade and Industry Minister, cde Rob Davies, has taken the bull by the horns by tackling the unscrupulous practise of fronting in corpo-

rate South Africa.

Black economic empowerment (BEE) has empowered some: but it has equally given rise to unintended consequences which are having severe ramifications for SMMEs and aspirant black entrepreneurs. The good intentions behind BEE have been superseded by a number of variables which normally stem from greed and corruption. The major reason for the failure of BEE is its vulnerability in implementation and how it is being manipulated to further entrench white monopoly capital.

Most potential fronters willingly collude with white companies for faster and passive compensation, usually risk-free and virtually guaranteed, rather than waiting for their ventures to grow. This route is seen as an easier method of accumulation than genuinely getting into business and fighting for space in a highly competitive business sector.

Government needs to not only hold accountable people who do this, but further assess why business opportunities are not disseminating down to SMMEs and establishing – and removing – entry barriers for black owned companies. Fronting will only reverse and stagnate the growth of black businesses, sustaining the status quo in our economy which continues to be conducive for white monopoly capital.

Fronting has also created 'tenderpreneur elitists' who, as a result of their political credentials, manoeuvre their way on

to boards of white corporations to secure lucrative tenders from government.

The perception that one can only be successful in business by being politically well-connected discourages hard work and entrepreneurship. Government not only needs to be more vigorous in implementing stringent monitoring policies, but the business environment still finds ways to create barriers and gate keep certain key sectors of our economy. The Competition Commission continues to expose colluders in various sectors and has taken a tough stance has been taken against collusion, with the message that price fixing will not be tolerated. We should avoid a situation where BEE collusion exists: in which a clique of politicians or well-connected people occupy boards of captains of industry, with no change moving down to the actual structure and operation of the company.

Government needs to take responsibility for the numerous loopholes which have been left for exploitation by more vigorously monitoring the whole process of implementing BEE. We should welcome the much needed interventions proposed by the cde Davies, on fronting in corporate South Africa. There has been an unjustified increase in the usage of black people to front for white companies to secure lucrative deals, particularly government tenders. This abusive culture is increasingly becoming acceptable in the private sector, to the detriment of black SMME players who genuinely want to do business. This stifles true transformation and sustains the legacy of lily white corporate South Africa. It is not surprising that so many close corporations are registered only to stagnate and ultimate de-register.

Black men and women who allow

themselves to be used as fronts must be held accountable and punished. The rent-a-black-face culture has distorted the actual intentions of the BEE and Broad-based black economic empowerment (BBEE) policies and legislation. We have seen an increase in passive, self-proclaimed business men and tenderpreneurs as opposed to genuine, skilled entrepreneurs.

Cde Davies naming of BEE rating agencies as part of the problem and as perpetrators in the booming fronting business should also be applauded. BEE accreditation certificates are being issued like medical certificates, without any verification or assessment by government that the certificate truly reflects the BEE status in the company. To curb corruption, the government should consider taking direct responsibility for verifying companies' BEE status and accreditation. It's shocking that accountants and lawyers have joined the bandwagon of finding sophisticated ways of fronting. To ensure BEE is taken seriously, harsher penalties must be put in place to punish company directors personally, in addition to fines imposed on their companies. White corporate South Africa has been cushioned with incentives and rebates if they comply with legislations which advocate for transformation. This cushion has become costly and ineffective for government; it has created cash-cows that cost the government millions, while benefited the private sector. A classic example is training by companies which see the company benefit more than the employee. Equally if BEE is not implemented vigorously and monitoring and verification are left to private agencies, the economic status quo will remain in the economy. ●

Cde Ndima is YCL National Spokesperson

SACP CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Saluting the ANC, NGC, the Growth Path and the YCL as a youth Vanguard

Cdes Ebrahim Patel, Nathi Mthethwa and Jesse Duarte addressed the annual augmented CC meeting

The annual augmented Central Committee of the SACP took place in Randburg from the 26 -28 November.

The augmented CC is, as the name suggests, an expanded CC that includes representation from the SACP's districts, the Young Communist League's provincial structures, and from institutions that the Party has jointly established – among them the Chris Hani Institute and the Financial Sector Charter Campaign. The annual augmented CC enables the SACP to collectively review the past year and to prepare for the next.

In reviewing 2010 the CC highlighted a number of key positive developments.

In the first place, the CC saluted the achievements of the ANC's October National General Council. We particularly welcomed the robust but disciplined manner in which the overwhelming majority of ANC branch delegates affirmed the key themes advanced by ANC President cde Jacob Zuma in his opening and closing addresses to the NGC. We believe there is now a clear determination on the part of the ANC and its membership to re-assert the historic values, discipline and strategic perspectives of the ANC and the movement it leads.

In affirming these positions, the NGC raised exactly the same issues that the SACP's December 2009 Special National Congress placed firmly on the national agenda. Collectively we need to address the dangers of a reckless demagogic populism. We need to guard against factional power plays based on narrow self-enrich-



Cde Ebrahim Patel: Briefed the CC on the New Growth Plan

YCL has emerged as a vanguard formation, bringing a militant but disciplined coherence into the youth sector

ment agendas in our movement. And we need to condemn disgraceful displays of conspicuous consumption, not least those that degrade women.

Continued membership growth and Party activism

The CC also welcomed the growing influence, activism and membership of the SACP and Young Communist League (YCL). The SACP's membership has grown by a further 20 000 members this year, bringing our total membership to 114 600 – confirming the SACP as the second largest political party in South Africa (after the ANC) in terms of active paid-up membership. Among the highlights of SACP work during 2010 has been the convening of ongoing political education workshops countrywide and at all levels from the local level up, many of them convened jointly with Cosatu affiliates.

The YCL – a vanguard youth formation

The YCL has also emerged ever more firmly as a vanguard youth formation, bringing a militant but disciplined coherence into a sector that is now often characterised by volatile, anarchic tendencies. Among the highlights of the YCL's year was its convening of a Jobs for Youth Summit that drew in participation from more than 50 formations, and included youth from the ANCYL, Sasco, Cosas, faith-based formations, and also, notably and encouragingly, from the DA, FF-plus and IFP formations.

The crisis of youth unemployment is a matter that needs to be taken up by all



**YCL 3rd National Congress
pull-out poster by
cde Tshepo Lethoko**

In Praise of Communism

It's sensible

Anyone can understand it

It's easy

You're not an exploiter

So you can grasp it

It's a good thing for you

Find out more about it

The stupid call it stupid

The squalid call it squalid





3RD NATIONAL CONGRESS 9 TO 12 DECEMBER MAFILHENG

It is against squalidity and stupidity

The exploiters call it crime

But we know

It is the end of crime

It is not madness but

The end of madness

It is not the riddle

But the solution

It is the simple thing

So hard to achieve



**The poem 'In Praise of Communism'
by Bertold Brecht (1898-1956),
German Marxist poet and playwright**



Cde Nathi Mthethwa (with water bottle) on anti-building hijacking patrol – he briefed the CC on this and other crime-fighting initiatives

South Africans. The CC urged the YCL to take forward its constructive work in this critical youth sector, and wished it well for its National Conference in Mafeking in mid-December.

The SACP – taking joint and collective responsibility for governance

The growing influence of the SACP has also been marked by the increasing appointment of communist cadres (in their own right as ANC cadres, of course) into key positions within government, in the national, provincial and local spheres. While the SACP does not measure its successes in narrow head-count terms, and while we are committed to the principle of deployments being based, above all, on capacity, commitment and a proven track-record, we are nonetheless heartened by deployment developments over the past year.

The SACP has never conceived of itself as a non-governmental organisation. In the current reality of SA, the SACP is committed, together with its Alliance partners, to building popular and working class power both outside of and WITHIN the state. In line with this commitment to take joint and collective responsibility for governance, the CC strongly re-affirmed decisions taken by the Party in regard to the deployment of its leadership (including its general secretary) nationally, provincially and locally. The CC also once more reaffirmed the Party's commitment to building

leadership collectives, and avoiding all attempts to reduce the question of leadership to individual personalities.

The New Growth Path

A key achievement of 2010 has been government's consolidation and public release of a New Growth Path perspective. Economic Development Minister cde Ebrahim Patel, presented government's NGP document to the CC. The CC warmly welcomed the major paradigm shift represented by the NGP and government's earlier announcement of the Industrial Policy Action Programme 2 (IPAP 2).

While we should certainly debate the detail of both IPAP and the NGP, this time around we must not allow detail to distract us from consolidating and defending the absolutely critical policy and programmatic shift that these policies now begin to represent. In essence this shift is characterised by the following key features:

- An agreement that we have to radically transform the systemic features of our present productive economy;
- The key objective is not to achieve

The CC warmly welcomed the major paradigm shift represented by the NGP and IPAP 2

an arbitrary GDP growth target (for example, 6% or 7%), but job creation and greater equality;

- These outcomes can only be achieved through active state intervention in the economy – through, amongst other things, planning, state-led investment, and the consolidation of a strong, strategically-mandated state owned enterprise and development finance institutions sector. This will require the consolidation of a new state-owned bank, and generally a strategically-disciplined, democratic state capable of driving a state-led but people-driven transformation process.

- The imperative of aligning macro-economic policies with our industrial policy and other productive economy objectives.

- The imperative of state-led coordination of and between critical sectors of society – for example, the productive economy, education and skills training, infrastructure development and environmental sustainability.

- As much as possible, our redistributive interventions, including broad based black economic empowerment, must also contribute coherently to the progressive transformation of the productive economy – for example, land redistribution can no longer simply be guided by principles of civil rights and historical redress (as important as these might be).

- The achievement of a new growth path will not be possible without also ad-

addressing the way in which SA has historically been located within the global capitalist system as a semi-peripheral primary commodity exporter and regional sub-imperial power – “a (capitalist) gateway to Africa”. The achievement of a NGP in SA will depend critically on our ability to play a progressive role in the reconstruction and development of our region. It will also depend on our ability to manoeuvre strategically within the context of major structural shifts within the global reality, not least through deepening anti-imperialist South-South relations.

These, we believe, are the core features of a new growth path. It is important to recognise that government has deliberately called it a “path” and not a “plan” – it is a strategic direction that we need to move along, learning and adapting as we proceed. Nothing is written in stone, other than the imperative of no longer delaying decisive action. Above all, we must not now turn government’s NGP into a debating forum. We need, from within and beyond government to begin, together, to actively and decisively take major steps to place our economy onto a new job-creating and more egalitarian path. We cannot wait any longer.

Global capitalism – a crisis that is not going away

2010 has underlined the correctness of what the SACP has been consistently saying – the global capitalist crisis that began in 2008 is deep-seated, structural in character and it will be long-lasting. Everywhere imperialist forces, private banks, and western governments are seeking to displace their crisis onto the backs of workers, the poor, and middle-class strata. Neo-liberalism’s anti-protectionist, free market presumptions lie in tatters as national capital interests scramble to save their own profits and life-styles. The US has cynically declared a currency war on the world with its so-called quantitative easing QE2 initiative – pushing an extra \$600billion into circulation – that will further appreciate currencies like the Rand, threatening our own efforts to reverse de-industrialisation.

In the course of 2010, the epicentre of the crisis has also shifted to the Euro-zone. The danger of toppling dominoes impelled by creditor-driven sovereign defaults is very real. The crisis in the Euro-zone is seeing drastic and aggressive moves by centrist governments to roll back popular gains.

In the face of these developments, everywhere there is working class and

A revitalised financial sector campaign, local elections and deepening work with unions in 2011

popular resistance. Day by day, the objective grounds for developing a very broad anti-imperialist front are developing.

Next weekend, the SACP will be convening the 12th International Meeting of Communist and Workers’ Parties. More than 80 parties from all over the world have confirmed their participation. The meeting will focus on the global capitalist crisis, and on the imperative for communists to take an active role internationally in turning the multitude of defensive struggles in every part of the world into an offensive struggle to roll back capitalism itself – a system that from every perspective, including being able to guarantee environmental sustainability, or decent work for all, or food security, increasingly demonstrates its threat to human civilisation itself.

Sixteen days of activism against violence against women and children

The SACP is actively engaged in the present “Sixteen Days of Activism”. We are a society in which patriarchy continues to be a deeply-entrenched challenge. Too often regressive male behaviour hides behind a cloak of “culture”. The SACP and the YCL are actively campaigning against reactionary customs like ukuthwala. The SACP, together with its allies, will be embarking on a campaign for the establishment of more shelters for the victims of gender violence. We encourage communities to continue speaking out against gender violence. While reports indicate that we are beginning to stabilise the number of new HIV infections, there is a need to intensify the HIV counselling and testing campaign with active community support.

The CC also received a report from the Minister of Police, cde Nathi Mthethwa. He briefed the CC on government’s strategic plans to combat crime and corruption. The CC engaged with the input, welcomed the progress made so far, and noted that it is the working class and poor in our country who are the principal victims of crime and corruption. Combating these evils is not just a matter for government, and the SACP once

more commits to helping to strengthen the role of communities and the labour movement in this regard.

The SACP’s programme of action for 2011

The CC discussed and approved the SACP 2011 programme of action. The key pillars of this programme include:

- Revitalising the broad-based campaign for the transformation of the financial sector. After a period of stale-mate, recently, important progress has been made in the Nedlac financial sector charter process thanks to a greater dynamism from the side of government. The SACP will be calling for a new Financial Sector Summit in 2011 convened by Nedlac. The Party will be resuscitating the broad front Financial Sector Charter Campaign structures as well as convening public forums and seminars. Notwithstanding some progress with, for instance, extending banking services to everyone, gains made are constantly threatened by the profit-maximising interests of the private banks. There are, for instance, indications that at least some of the banks are planning to walk away from the Mzansi Account which achieved a remarkable 6 million new accounts within the space of a few years. Critical challenges in our struggle to transform the financial sector include the establishment of a state-run bank, cooperative financing, and the challenge of providing loans to working-class families for housing and for higher education fees for their children.

- Local government elections – the SACP will be participating integrally in the ANC-led election campaign, including in the development of the manifesto, and consolidation of local election structures. The CC received an input on the forthcoming campaign from ANC NWC member, cde Jessie Duarte.

- Deepening our work with the progressive trade union movement – including taking up the challenges of a consolidating an effective social wage for the working class especially in relation to housing, public transport, and the National Health Insurance, and linking these to Cosatu’s living wage campaign. The SACP will also be expanding its joint political schools with Cosatu affiliates.

- In the course of 2011, the SACP will continue to engage actively with its internationalist work, including ongoing solidarity efforts with Swaziland, Cuba, Western Sahara and Palestine. We will also convene on International Women’s Day (8 March) a continent-wide African Women’s Conference. ●

CIVIL SOCIETY

The Civil Society Conference, the NDR and the liberal onslaught

We need to avoid being manipulated by the agenda of anti-majority, right-wing liberalism

BY JEREMY CRONIN

“In the art of war, each belligerent chooses the terrain considered most advantageous for its battle for the offensive and tries to impose that terrain on its adversary, so that it is put on the defensive. The same goes for politics ...” (Samir Amin, “The Battlefields Chosen by Contemporary Imperialism”)

The truth of Samir Amin’s observation is particularly evident in the current South African reality. Those in our society who are opposed to fundamental transformation naturally seek to shift politics on to a terrain that they calculate is most favourable for them to put us on to the defensive.

They seek to produce a particular reading of South Africa that, they hope, will dominate on the air-waves, in the print media columns, and generally hegemonise public debate. If you succeed in shaping the terrain, then you shape how most of us then often unconsciously begin to understand our challenges and how we respond to them in practice.

As things have shifted, these anti-transformation forces have adapted their tactics. For instance, with the implosion of Cope, they have once more swung much of their attention and hopes away from the party political terrain and back towards “civil society”. But the underlying strategic agenda remains the same – to constrain the democratic state, to weaken and divide the majority, to sow

popular demoralisation about government, and to mobilise against what is supposed to be a dire threat to our constitution emanating from the “ruling elite”.

We should, of course, not be in denial about the serious gaps opened up for this line of attack by real weaknesses within the state and the ANC and our Alliance formations. In particular, there is a compradorial and parasitic rent-seeking stratum within our movement, often linked to a demagogic populism that has little respect for legality or the Constitution. As we have argued elsewhere, anti-majoritarian liberal forces are happy to provide a media megaphone for this demagogic populism – the better to be able to condemn us all. The existence of this phenomenon (what we have called “the new tendency”) creates space for all manner of anti-ANC forces. This is why it is absolutely imperative that the government, the ANC and its alliance partners together lead the process of dealing firmly, and without fear or favour, with the scourge of corruption and demagoguery.

However, using the gap created by this minority “new tendency” within our own ranks (and seeking to present

its antics as the “real” ANC), the anti-transformation forces seek to displace the liberation movement’s strategic hegemony with their own anti-majoritarian liberalism. In essence this consists in trying to displace the idea of an ongoing national democratic revolution (NDR) with a politics of “civil rights claims”. This is done by establishing a false dichotomy between the realisation of civil rights in SA and the NDR, with the latter portrayed as the “enemy” of civil rights and the Constitution.

Civil rights ‘versus’ the national democratic revolution – a false dichotomy

Liberalism exists in SA in two basic forms – a right-wing, free market, anti-majoritarian liberalism and a more centre-left leaning, NGO/“social movement” liberalism. There are differences between these currents of liberalism, but they share a common fundamental paradigm and, for a variety of reasons, there has been a growing practical convergence between them in the recent period. In our current reality liberalism (in both its versions) seeks to shift the centre of our national debate:

From the necessity for a radical structural transformation of our society (notably, placing our economy on to a “new growth path”) ... to a debate about defending civil rights (as if radically transforming our economy was not fundamental to the real consolidation of civil rights for all South Africans).

From the necessity of organising and building people’s power both outside and

There is a compradorial and parasitic rent-seeking stratum within our movement

inside the state ... to defending individual rights by organising “civil society” as a watchdog against the state. For right-wing liberalism the emphasis is on restricting the state, for social liberalism the emphasis tends to fall more on demanding that the state “deliver” on its constitutional mandate (that is, an essentially “redistributionist” rather than transformational agenda). This largely redistributionist approach quickly plays into a right-wing liberal agenda that says – fine, but to redistribute you need the private sector to “grow the size of the cake”. Whatever the differences of emphasis, both currents tend to “blame” the state (and ruling party) one-sidedly for all short-comings and problems (whether a lack of delivery or corruption). Linked to this, is the attempt to move the debate and strategic programme –

From an analysis of *all* power relations in our society including the power of capital ... to an analysis that suggests that all (or most) power vests with the state and the rest of society is “civil society” – a collection of powerless individual citizens (or at best minorities) whose private property (according to right-wing liberalism) or basic social rights (the social liberals) are constantly under threat from the state and political elites. We get a politics that masquerades as apolitical, an anti-politics politics that regards political-politics as fundamentally “dirty”. This anti-politics politics is, in turn, linked to the attempt to shift us programmatically

- From a radical and popular *nationalism* that is inclusive (non-racial and non-tribalist), that organises and mobilises on the basis of the black majority’s extensive traditions of struggle and ongoing (and legitimate) sense of national grievance ... to a discourse about the “tyranny of the majority” and Afro-pessimism. In this discourse we are increasingly getting choral interplays between right-wing liberals and social liberals, like the duet pioneered by RW “Bill” Johnson and Khehla Shubane (chummy partners in the *Business Day*’s long-running “Dear Bill/Dear Khehla” series). Lately, cde Kader Asmal’s soprano declaration “it is time to scrap the NDR”, has been warmly responded to by a right-wing liberal chorus (thus Paul Hoffman, “Asmal is right: it’s time to abandon the ‘revolution’”, *Business Day*, 8 Nov 2010). Linked to which is the attempt to displace the national debate and our programmatic agenda ...

- From locating our own national

The underlying agenda remains to constrain the democratic state and to divide the majority

democratic struggle within the wider context of an internationalist struggle against imperialism and the head-long destruction of our planet by capitalism’s profit-maximising imperative of resource-depleting compound growth ... to the idea of “post”-colonialism (oppression of the South is supposedly now more or less over, any problems can be ascribed to Third World-African political elites).

The SACP, socialism and liberal values

Historically, the SACP has always understood that we should incorporate what we might call “liberal values” into our strategic programme. Indeed, it was the Communist Party in SA that was decades ahead of any other political formation in advancing the call for one-person one-vote in SA.

It was the CPSA way back in the 1920s that pioneered in theory (and in practical, day-to-day organisational work) the fundamental principle of individual equality, regardless of race or gender. And it was the CPSA that was in the forefront of struggles around freedom of speech and media freedoms. We were in the vanguard in SA on these civil liberties precisely because we understood them to be part and parcel of a wider revolutionary struggle for democracy (and socialism).

We understood then (as now) that democracy in SA cannot be advanced, deepened and defended unless there are major socio-economic structural transformations of our society. Indeed, placing our economy on to a new job-creating and more egalitarian growth path is not incidental to democracy, it is the *key* (national) democratic task of our time.

Linked to this approach to “liberal values”, the SACP in practice has also always sought to work with a wide range of social liberal forces – whether within the ANC and our broader movement, or, as in the 1970s and 80s, with many such forces that formed part of the international anti-apartheid movement.

Over the past 10 years with our successive Red October campaigns we have, likewise, worked with and learnt from

active campaigning together with a wide range of forces, including many NGO/social movement and faith-based formations, around transforming the financial sector, or land reform, or dealing with the scourge of corruption. In all of our campaigns, while respecting the independence and diversity of other formations, we have always endeavoured to locate the campaign within our strategic perspective of advancing the national democratic revolution.

For this reason, we have always invited, as a key priority, our Alliance partners to participate in these campaigns. And while, generally, Cosatu and its affiliates have done so, most often the ANC has supported the campaigns in theory, but there has been very little practical engagement from its side.

In fact, however, it is the ANC that should really be leading a wide range of progressive, “civil society” forces in popular campaigns to transform the financial sector, or for land reform, or against the scourge of corruption.

But this has not happened for many reasons, related mainly to the problematic transformation of the ANC through the latter half of the 1990s and into the 2000s from a movement into an electoral machine often beset with competing groupings narrowly focused on electoral lists and factional slates. The ANC collectively is very much aware of these negative developments – as the recent resolutions of the NGC attest.

The Cosatu-convened ‘Civil Society Conference’

It is against this overall background that the SACP appreciated Cosatu’s convening of a “civil society” conference involving more than 50 formations on the 27 and 28 October.

The SACP also noted the assurance given by Cosatu that this was not an anti-government or anti-ANC alliance gathering, nor, we were assured, was it aimed at eventually establishing a new “workers’ party”. The SACP also welcomes the positive elements contained within the subsequent “Declaration of the Civil Society Conference”.

However, in the light of our preceding discussion about the dangers of a deepening convergence between right-wing anti-majoritarian liberalism and social liberal NGO currents, a number of critical issues do arise concerning the “Civil Society Conference”. These critical issues essentially revolve around one major issue: What exactly were the *strategic* assump-

tions underpinning the conference?

In response to criticism of the conference made by the ANC's secretary general, cde Gwede Mantashe, Cosatu was quoted in the media saying that cde Mantashe failed to "understand the nature and role of civil society in the national democratic revolution." But what is the role of "civil society" in the NDR? Certainly, nowhere in the conference's declaration will you find any explanation – in fact, you will not find any reference whatsoever to the NDR. The NDR (the core strategic platform of the ANC-led alliance and of all Cosatu congress resolutions going back to its formation in 1985) is nowhere to be found in the declaration. Of course, it shouldn't just be a question of using the words "national", "democratic" and "revolution", but the absence of the NDR as an organising *concept* in the declaration is symptomatic of a wider issue that relates to the notion of "civil society".

So what about the other core concept that the ANC supposedly doesn't understand – "civil society"? If the NDR has disappeared from the declaration, the notion of "civil society" is to be found everywhere. Here are a few examples from the declaration:

"as well as backing the government's efforts to investigate corruption allegations, we need a civil society anti-corruption mechanism [that] should be a civil society owned initiative."

"The conference agreed to the concept of a Social Justice Charter, which can be used as a campaigning tool to mobilise society, particularly workers and communities, around issues of social justice ... Any new Charter must ... reflect civil society values. It can't simply repeat principles already in the Constitution but must expand on principles such as public participation to enforce social justice."

"It [the proposed Charter] must reflect the duty of civil society to hold government accountable ... while expressing the need for solidarity and unity of civil society."

"There will be annual meetings of labour and civil society to take forward the social justice movement."

But what exactly is 'civil society'?

The confusion around this concept is immediately apparent in the very last quotation cited above referring to annual meetings of "labour and civil society". Does this mean that "labour" (presumably, organised labour) is not *part* of "civil society", but rather an "ally" of

It was the CPSA way back in the 1920s that pioneered the principle of individual equality

"civil society"? Elsewhere the declaration is clearly using the concept of "civil society" to embrace labour. But this is merely a minor symptom of a much bigger problem.

"Civil society" is a core liberal concept supposedly designating that part of society which is "non-state". Within a liberal paradigm the "state" is, basically, a necessary evil – "civil society" (the "market") requires some regulation and policing (but preferably not too much). "Civil society" is, by contrast, supposedly a realm of "freedom", of individual choice, creativity and entrepreneurship.

Academic and media commentator Prince Mashele (who was a participant in the "Civil Society Conference") usefully exposes precisely all of these liberal assumptions about "civil society" in his defence of the conference against the criticisms of the ANC's secretary general, who, he says, was: "demanding that the ANC or the government must always be present whenever ordinary citizens meet [of course, cde Mantashe made no such ludicrous demand at all] ... What is wrong with ordinary South Africans meeting to declare war on corruption? Is there something seditious about powerless non-governmental organisations who call for an ethical society?" – "Cry freedom and let loose the ANC hounds such as Mantashe", *Sunday Independent*, 7 November 2010)

There are a host of problems in Mashele's argument here. What disqualifies non-invitees like the ANC, the SACP and Sanco from being "non-governmental" organisations? And what makes Cosatu, the TAC, or the Social Justice Coalition suddenly "powerless non-governmental organisations"? And notice further the slippage between these supposedly "powerless" (but well-funded) formations and the idea that this was a meeting of "ordinary citizens ... ordinary South Africans". Above all, note how what Mashele is doing here is exactly the liberal manoeuvre that we noted at the beginning of this intervention – turning a strategic question (what was the transformational agenda of the conference?)

into a "civil rights" matter (Cosatu and others have the "right" to meet whenever and with whomsoever they choose – of course they do! But that isn't the issue).

Mashele goes on to ask what motivated the ANC's concerns around the conference. And he answers his own question thus: "While there could be numerous other explanations, the most compelling seems to be in the dirty politics of post-colonial Africa. Many things have now occurred to burst the bubble of South African exceptionalism. We are a typical post-colonial African state."

Again notice how other core themes of the current liberal offensive against the NDR are picked up – Afro-pessimism, the idea of "post-colonialism", and the supposedly inevitable "dirtiness" of African politics.

It might be argued that these are all Mashele's individual views. Unfortunately, however, there are moments when, for instance, cde Zwelinzima Vavi appeared to be falling into the same paradigm. For instance, could it be a similar assumption of inherent dirtiness that informed cde Vavi's explanation for why the ANC and SACP were not invited to the conference: "We kept the gathering *clean* and did not involve political parties." (*Sunday Times*, 31 October 2010). Perhaps this was just an unfortunate metaphor? Maybe. But in his prepared written speech to the conference, cde Vavi told delegates: "We are making our political parties new battlegrounds where we have replaced the apartheid regime in killing and poisoning ... Look what is happening in Cope, IFP. Now even Lucas Mangope is not safe. Look what is happening in the ANC in some provinces. Look at the number of splits in every political party. Genuineness is fast becoming a rare commodity!"

Although, "every" political party is accused here, notice how the political parties cde Vavi actually mentions are all those that are predominantly black parties. This anti-politics politics with its hint of Afro-pessimism, unintentionally no doubt, plays straight into the hands of anti-majoritarian right-wing liberals – in fact, it represents their hegemony.

Apart from "cleanliness", Cde Vavi explained the exclusion of political parties from the conference on the grounds that if some were invited all the others would also want to be invited. But why does this not also apply to the tens of thousands of potential "civil society" invitees who were not on the guest list? After all, De Beers and Afriforum are also part of "civil

society". And if big corporations and relatively successful (if conservative) social movements like Afriforum are also part of "civil society", then what exactly does the conference declaration mean when it calls for "the ... solidarity and unity of civil society"?

Of course, in drawing up the invitation list the organisers quite correctly included some and excluded others: they made *political* decisions. And so, again, we return to the same question: what precisely were the underlying political (strategic) assumptions that informed the guest list and everything else about the conference? Perhaps these were not clearly thought through on the side of Cosatu, but what about the other leading participants?

Apart from Cosatu, three NGO formations quickly asserted a co-convening posture – the Treatment Action Campaign, Section 27 and the Social Justice Coalition.

Notwithstanding a passing genuflection to Cosatu's economic policy paper, it is the language and campaigning demands of these three formations that dominate the declaration. These three formations are basically run by a handful of overlapping personalities. Section 27 and the SJC morphed out of the TAC at a time when, thanks to the defeat of AIDS-denialism (in which the TAC's progres-

The core themes of the liberal offensive: Afro-pessimism and the supposedly inevitable 'dirtiness' of African politics

sive campaigning played a major part), the single focus of the TAC had lost some of its traction. The leading personalities in all three formations overlap and interconnect. Many also share an activist history going back to the 1980s when they were involved in the "Marxist Workers' Tendency" – a left-wing entryist formation that sought to transform the ANC into a workers' party.

While the declaration of the "Civil Society Conference" speaks of working *with* government, this isn't necessarily how some of these formations appear to position themselves. For instance, in a web-posting calling for volunteers to apply for internships, the SJC tells us: "The organisation focuses on the failure of government in the areas of service deliv-

ery, corruption and accountability, and the attacks from political leaders on the Constitution and Judiciary."

How does that differ from the FW De Klerk Foundation? We accept cde Vavi's assurances that there was no oppositionist, anti-government, or anti-Alliance agenda on Cosatu's part in convening the conference. The position of the leadership core of the TAC/Section27/SJC is less clear. But it would certainly be extremely surprising if the major funders of these latter formations (both domestic and international), who have also been major funders of Cope, did not have an agenda that was a wee bit more than just philanthropic.

We are not saying something crass like "these formations are simply imperialist agents". Nor are we remotely alleging that they are part of some "major conspiracy". Nor are we saying that we should never work with them in their respective campaigns – on the contrary.

But we *are* saying that, as Alliance partners, we need to be very careful that we are not manipulated into someone else's strategic agenda, particularly when that agenda is itself increasingly hegemonised by a much more right-wing, anti-majoritarian liberalism. ●

Cde Cronin is SACP Deputy General Secretary



SOME THINGS IN LIFE ARE FREE

A FREE monthly magazine, produced in pdf format, each issue of **The ColdType Reader** is packed with stories about issues that affect the lives of working people around the world

Download the latest issue, and get a FREE subscription, at www.coldtype.net

SACP MEMBERSHIP

20 000 new Red South Africans this year – we’ve topped 116 000!

BY SOLLY MAPAILA

The 2009 Special National Congress (SNC), in Polokwane last December, endorsed the CC’s declaration of 2010 as the “Year of the Branch”.

The SNC also reaffirmed resolutions taken in the 12th Congress and the 2008 National Policy Conference to strive towards creating a branch in all the 17 000 voting districts and attaining membership of 1% of the South African population in the medium to long term.

The membership of the SACP has grown significantly from 96 000 in December 2009 to about 116 000, this is a growth of 20 000. This growth is a result of various campaigns and the principled

working class leadership provided by the Party over the period. The growth also reflects a huge intake of members between the ages of 20 and 29, with an increased number of women members. This is a significant achievement towards our efforts to build communist cadres across all sectors of society.

A worrying factor is that the majority of SACP members are unemployed. However there are signs that this is changing. The number of unemployed member has been reduced from 70% last year in December to 56%.

This year’s Recruitment Month (August) launch was hosted by the Limpopo Province, and the latest statistics confirm that despite all the challenges, the campaign was a success. At the end of August

the membership stood at 109 138, currently there 114 600 members with 1 452 forms still to be captured. In essence the membership stands at 116 052 members, a growth of 6 914 in about two months.

If the current growth rate is not improved or changed, the Party is likely to fall behind with our target of reaching 500 000 by 2014. Currently the growth, on an annual basis, stands at between 400 00 and 50,000 members. At this rate membership is likely be around 300 000 to by 2014. If the Party is to meet its target of 500 000 members by 2014, the minimum growth target per annum should be 70 000 new members. ●

Cde Mapaila is Politburo Secretary for Organising

	National	Western Cape	North West	Northern Cape	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	KZN	Gauteng	Free State	Eastern
Cape Members	114 600	5 959	7 195	4 358	16 467	17 165	26 892	14 503	5 550	16 514
Gender										
Men	45 771	2 200	2 792	1 638	6 971	7 689	10 156	5 029	1 569	7 727
Women	68 829	3 756	4 403	2 720	9 496	9 476	16 735	9 474	3 981	8 787
Property										
Own house	44 116	1 903	2 706	1 624	7 011	7 578	10 684	4 723	2 132	5 755
Age										
+ 60	6 691	237	539	276	807	882	1 252	966	184	1 548
40-59	48 597	2 214	2 725	6 148	5 703	6 148	9 184	6 774	2 233	7 468
20-39	52 147	2 419	3 193	2 202	8 292	8 596	13 531	5 367	2 248	6 299
Under 20	732	18	36	39	170	193	148	56	22	50
Occupation										
Unemployed	64 454	2 606	3 659	2 323	9 884	980	17 531	7 805	1 583	9 483
Professional	6 905	341	317	173	1 020	1 358	1 465	799	525	907
Levy under 100 165	1 374	93	110	73	160	180	207		292	94
Worker	19 161	1 465	1 538	841	2 468	1 793	3 647	2 954	1 982	2 473
Pensioner	503	17	45	16	43	69	101	61	16	135
Student	2 623	118	129	165	389	666	547	300	82	227
Alliance organisations										
ANC member	64 429	3 146	3 845	2 536	9 726	10 012	15 772	7 238	2 606	9 548
Membership status										
Arrears	2 381	216	121	127	278	255	511	297	238	338
Suspended	5 240	697	343	236	418	604	1 086	573	498	785
Incomplete	423	60	31	13	62	26	109	49	45	28
No ID	9 700	1 057	676	477	1 144	1 358	1 884	1 140	855	1 109
Active in D/O	11 964	857	673	474	1 676	1 229	2 818	1 626	1 097	1 514

ICWP

SACP views on issues of the 12th ICWP Conference

As Umsebenzi went to print, the 12th ICWP conference had just begun. Below are extracts of a draft document prepared by the SACP of some of the issues we think should be discussed in the Conference. The SACP will seek to secure consensus on some of these issues

The SACP feels that the conference should take forward the work of previous meetings, and develop common activities around a shared perspective on the deepening crisis of capitalism.

In the context of this deepening crisis, the conference must focus on the tasks of communists in defence of sovereignty, deepening social alliances, and strengthening the anti-imperialist front in the struggle for peace, environmental sustainability, progress and socialism.

The deepening capitalist crisis

The international situation continues to be dominated by the persisting and indeed deepening crisis of capitalism. This reality confirms the analyses outlined in the declarations of the 2008 Sao Paulo and 2009 New Delhi 10th and 11th international meetings. The present crisis of capitalism is characterised by the confluence of systemic, structural and civilisational features.

Systemic: The crisis is **systemic** – despite pre-2008 capitalist illusions to the contrary, capitalism is unable to escape its in-built, systemic tendency to go through cycles of boom and bust. The current global crisis is, in part, a particularly severe (but otherwise “normal”) capitalist downturn occasioned by capitalist over-accumulation. Now, as in the past, there is no answer, within the logic of capitalism, to these periodic crises other than crisis itself, marked by the massive and socially irrational destruc-

The theme of the ICWP Congress is: The deepening systemic crisis of capitalism. The tasks of Communists in defence of sovereignty, deepening social alliances, strengthening the anti-imperialist front in the struggle for peace, progress and Socialism

tion of assets – including mass job layoffs, factory closures, and the wholesale erosion of people’s savings. This is why, at previous two international meetings, we correctly asserted that the current crisis was not merely attributable to subjective failings, to the greed of bankers or financial speculators. It remains, in part, a crisis embedded in the systemic features of capitalism itself.

Structural: The crisis is **structural** – the persisting crisis is compounded by significant structural changes in the world capitalist system. In particular, there is the ongoing relative decline of US economic global hegemony, general productive stagnation in most advanced capitalist economies, and the emergence of new global economic powers, notably China. Structural changes on a world scale of this kind are actively resisted by declining but still extremely aggressive imperialist powers.

This active resistance has sharpened in the year since the last international meeting. It includes:

- the US-led currency war;
- the concentration and centralisation of economic and political power within the EU;
- a distinct sharpening of the inter-imperialist struggle for markets and access to raw materials;
- expanding militarism, including the strengthening of aggressive alliances (for example, the Nato Lisbon Summit), the profusion of regional points of tension (notably in the Middle East, Central Asia and the Horn of Africa), coups in Latin America, and the increasing militarisation of Africa through, among other things, Africom.

Civilisational: The crisis is **civilisational** – there is now a well-established international scientific consensus that the current global growth trajectory, with its profit-maximising, headlong destruction of natural resources, is unsustainable. Unless it is reversed, it poses a grave threat to the sustainability of human civilization itself.

While generally acknowledging the threat, political elites in the dominant capitalist states are unwilling to and incapable of providing global leadership to reverse the present trajectory. Various proposals for “green technologies” and carbon trading at best represent marginal adjustments while deepening the commodification of nature, and the displacement of climate change crises on to less developed countries.

We host the 12th gathering of communist and workers' parties!

As *Umsebenzi* went to print, the 12th international congress was about to begin. The SACP issued the following media statement:

The South African Communist Party (SACP) will be hosting the 12th International meeting of Communist and Workers Parties (ICWP) in Centurion, Swan Lake Lodge Conference Centre, from 3-5 December 2010. It follows the successful hosting of the 1st Africa Left Network Forum (Alnef) and 2nd African Participatory Democracy Conference (APDC), in Johannesburg in August 2010.

The meeting, to be held on the African continent for the first time, marks an important achievement in the movement of international communist and workers' parties. It completes the circle of convening international meetings on all continents of the world. It will be attended by about 60 communist and workers' parties, representing 50 countries from all continents.

SACP General Secretary, cde Blade Nzimande, will

open the meeting on Friday 3 December. South African and African National Congress President, cde Jacob Zuma, will address the gathering on Friday at 16h00. Other speakers includes a representative of Cosatu and the World Federation of Democratic Youth.

As part of the meeting a public rally will be held on Friday 3 December at the Johannesburg City Hall at 18h00. The rally is to demand the release of the 5 Cuban Heroes currently held in US prison, serving four life sentences and 75 years collectively, after being wrongly convicted in US federal court in Miami, on June 8, 2001. They are Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González. The Five were falsely accused by the US government of committing espionage, conspiracy, and other related crimes – when, in fact they risked their lives to infiltrate terrorist groups based in Miami who, with the knowledge of the FBI and the CIA, have been involved in actions against Cuba. Theirs was a just cause to prevent criminal activities and protect the lives of the Cuban people and many others. ●

The civilisational crisis that we face as humankind is directly linked to capitalism's inability to reproduce itself except through a voracious pursuit of compound growth. It is a crisis that can only be overcome through the abolition of capitalism itself.

Faced with these realities, everywhere **capital fights back**, seeking to preserve profits and to displace the burden of its crisis on to the working class, the urban and rural poor, and a wide range of middle strata. Exploitation is intensified, the state is used to rescue private bankers and financial houses while exposing future generations to unsustainable levels of debt, and there are intensified efforts to roll back social gains.

As in all capitalist crises there are also attempts to divert popular insecurity into right-wing demagoguery and xenophobia. Over the recent period there has been an alarming growth of racism and extreme right-wing forces in Europe and the US.

At the regional and global scale the same attempts at displacement of the crisis are to be found. Regionally, in the EU for instance, countries like Ireland and Greece are once more being subordinated to a dependent, semi-colonial status. In Africa, Asia and Latin America we are witnessing the imposition on our peoples of new mechanisms of national

oppression, including economic, financial, political and military means as well as the deployment of an array of pro-imperialist NGOs.

However, for the mass of peoples, in particular in Africa, Asia and Latin America, it is important to remember that, even before the current global economic crisis, life under capitalism was a continuing crisis, a daily struggle for bare survival.

Even before the current global crisis, one billion people were living in squalid slums, and half of the world's population was surviving on less than \$2 a day.

Most of these urban and rural poor, along with family members working as vulnerable migrants in foreign countries, are the displaced victims of the accelerated capitalist agrarian revolution underway in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Global capitalism, spear-headed by the major corporates in the agro-industrial sector, has declared war on nearly one-

half of humanity – the three billion remaining peasant farmers in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The capitalist agrarian revolution in these three continents is happening within a space of decades – compared, for instance, to the earlier European centuries-long revolution. In the European capitalist agrarian revolution, many of the millions of dispossessed subsistence farmers were absorbed into labour-intensive industries of an earlier epoch of capitalism. Millions more emigrated as settlers into the “New” World and elsewhere. Today, more capital intensive industries and all manner of apartheid-like barriers to control and regulate migrant labour into developed economies, ensure that there is an ever-increasing mushrooming of urban and peri-urban slums populated by desperate de-classed masses involved in a variety of petty survivalist activities. Capitalism has no answer to the agrarian question. In fact, the accelerated capitalist agrarian revolution in the countries of the South has genocidal implications.

The importance of the resistance struggles of the working class and popular forces

Across the world, capital's attempts to load the burden of the crisis on to workers and the poor are being met by working class and popular resistance.

The capitalist crisis can only be overcome through the abolition of capitalism itself

Over the past year, in the face of anti-civilisational austerity moves, there has been an escalation of popular struggles in Europe – in Greece, France, Portugal and elsewhere.

Imperialist aggression in the Middle East, Central Asia and Latin America continues to meet resolute popular resistance.

In Africa and Latin America, democratic governments, trade unions, and social movements have escalated their struggles for sovereign development and the protection of their natural resources and bio-diversity.

In the current reality, it is an historic imperative that as communist and Workers' Parties we help to strengthen these popular defensive battles and, at the same time, help to transform them into offensive struggles for the abolition of capitalism.

In advancing this strategic agenda, there are three important areas of activist engagement to which, as communists, we shall pay particular attention:

- The defence, consolidation and advance of popular sovereignty
- The deepening of social alliances
- Strengthening the anti-imperialist front for peace, environmental sustainability, progress and socialism
- The defence, consolidation and advance of popular sovereignty

In the face of the intensified aggression of transnational (particularly finance) capital, the struggle to defend, consolidate and advance national sovereignty has become increasingly salient. The struggle for popular sovereignty is a struggle for national dignity, for the defence of democracy and of economic development and social progress.

The defence of sovereignty and real national independence is a fundamental task in the struggle against big capital and reactionary forces in all countries. National conservative forces everywhere are nurtured and supported by foot-loose, cosmopolitan finance capital. The defence of sovereignty is a necessary condition for political and economic changes in the interest of the workers and peoples.

The defence, consolidation and advance of sovereignty is a fundamental struggle against imperialism for more equitable international relations and the construction of areas of cooperation and regional integration based upon the equality of the rights of the peoples and countries.

The defence, consolidation and ad-

We have a critical role in drawing the links between different sites of popular struggle

vance of popular sovereignty is of particular importance in Africa and in other continents and regions that have experienced decades and even centuries of colonial and semi-colonial oppression. 2010 marks the 50th anniversary of the commencement of the formal de-colonisation of Africa.

Yet everywhere, including in the African diaspora, the grim legacy of the slave-trade, of colonial dispossession and plunder persist. Notwithstanding 50 years of formal de-colonisation, everywhere neo-colonial interventions are reinforced with the aid of local comprador and bureaucratic elites.

In Africa, Asia and Latin America, the struggle to defend, consolidate and advance sovereignty is a struggle to consolidate national and regional integrity overcoming the legacy of narrow enclaves of primary commodity extraction and grossly skewed development. It is a struggle that requires the active protagonism and unity of the popular masses. The condition for this protagonism is broadening the scope of popular democracy. The struggle for sovereignty is, therefore, both a struggle for balanced development and effective democracy.

Deepening social alliances

The ongoing crisis of capitalism and its anti-civilisational fight back are creating the conditions to build broad social, anti-monopolistic and anti-imperialist alliances capable of gaining power and promoting deep progressive changes.

Working class unity is a fundamental factor in ensuring the construction of effective social alliances with the peasantry, the mass of urban and rural poor, the urban middle class strata and intellectuals. Particular attention needs to be paid to the aspirations of, and challenges confronting youth.

The land question, agrarian reform and rural development are central to the development of a progressive alternative especially in lesser developed countries. Here, as elsewhere, the land question is inextricably linked to food sovereignty

and security, sustainable livelihoods, the defence of bio-diversity, the protection of national resources, and the struggle against agro-industrial monopolies and their local agents.

In these struggles, the legitimate and progressive aspirations of indigenous peoples in defence of their cultures, languages and environments have been increasingly asserted.

The role of communists in strengthening the anti-imperialist front for peace, environmental sustainability, progress and socialism

Imperialism's crisis and counter-offensive are leading to the broadening and diversification of the forces that objectively assume a patriotic and anti-imperialist stand.

Everywhere, in our diverse national realities, communists have a responsibility to strengthen the anti-imperialist front for peace, environmental sustainability, progress and socialism. While respecting the autonomy and diversity of a range of progressive forces, and while learning from their different perspectives, aspirations and struggles, the role of communists is of vital importance to ensure a consistent anti-imperialist perspective.

We have a critical role to play in drawing the critical links in theory and above all in practice between different sites of popular struggle – for sovereignty, for ecological sustainability, for social justice, for decent work, for sustainable livelihoods. We have a major responsibility to ensure that the ravages effected by imperialism in general and by the current crisis in particular and the consequent popular insecurities and national grievances are not appropriated by reactionary, obscurantist and chauvinistic forces. As communists we seek to build on progressive national aspirations and struggles for sovereignty, by building links of practical, internationalist solidarity between these aspirations and the progressive struggles of peoples around the world.

We are living in an historic epoch in which the transition from capitalism to socialism has become a civilisational imperative. The all-round crisis of capitalism once more underlines the inseparable nature of the tasks of national liberation and social, national and class emancipation.

The strengthening of the cooperation among communist parties and the strengthening of the anti-imperialist front, should march side by side. ●

COSATU



Cosatu President S'dumo Dlamini addresses a mass Cosatu strike march in Johannesburg

Cosatu celebrates 25 fighting years!

Born in 1985, in the white heat of the struggle against apartheid, the federation continues to champion the interests of workers – and the NDR

BY RENEVA FOURIE

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) commemorated its 25th year of existence with a series of celebrations across the country in the first week of December, culminating in a rally on Saturday, 4 December, at the Johannesburg Stadium.

The meeting was addressed by senior speakers from government and leadership of the Alliance with cde Blade Nzimande delivering a message of support on behalf of the SACP. Local musicians such as Jonas Gwangwa, Letta Mbulu, Vusi Mahlasela, Rebecca Malope, DJ Cleo, Big Nuz, Ntando and Ihashi Elimhlophe filled the atmosphere with jubilation.

The festive spirit was well deserved. Cosatu's dedication to challenging exploitation in the workplace and in soci-

The next Umsebenzi will carry a full report on Cosatu's anniversary celebrations, and on the federation's 25 fighting years

ety is immeasurable.

Launched in Durban in December 1985, in the heart of militant resistance to an apartheid government that was at its most brutal, this federation of workers representatives across every industry ensured the collapse of a racist economy. Workers sacrificed material comfort to drive change in the workplace and in their communities. While they established structures in their areas of work to improve conditions of service, they also built locals in communities and togeth-

er with other United Democratic Front formations, championed change on the ground. It is this collective effort that led to the fall of the apartheid regime and the beginning of negotiations for a non-racial democracy in 1990.

Post liberation, Cosatu has continued to play a crucial role in advancing the national democratic revolution as part of the governing alliance, while not forsaking its responsibility to transform the workplace. Democracy is meaningless if the lives of the black working class remain unchanged. Cosatu has a track record of 25 years of unwavering commitment to economic and social justice. This powerful force will ensure that the ideals that formed the foundation of the struggle against apartheid colonialisms are never forsaken. ●

Reneva Fourie is an SACP member



Cde Isu is 80!

A major commemoration was held to observe SACP and ANC veteran and former Robben Islander, cde Lalo Isu Chiba's, 80th birthday in Lenasia. Among the speakers were Cdes Ahmed Kathrada, Toyko Sekwale and Ronnie Kasrils. The SACP expresses its good wishes to Cde Isu.



"Your eye is quick to see those in need. Your bravery as an MK soldier will never be forgotten, nor will your courage in withstanding torture after your capture. We respect the iron discipline which prevented you from telling us about those experiences until years after we had left prison." – cde Nelson Mandela's birthday message to cde Isu

SACP IN CUBA

SACP and CCP agree to meet more regularly

Parties agree to more regular exchanges – through their youth wings, student exchanges – and to strengthen the Cuba international solidarity movement

BY CHRIS MATLHAKO

On the invitation of the Cuban Communist Party (CCP), the SACP sent a senior delegation to Cuba in October as part of ongoing exchanges between our two fraternal parties.

The delegation met representatives of the CCP Central Committee, the International Department, provincial structures of the CCP, the Young Communist League, the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples, trade unions, agricultural cooperatives, and Committees for the Defence of the Revolution, as well as the Minister of Higher Education. The delegation also visited a school and clinic and various sites of cultural and historical interest. The delegation met representatives of the Cuban Five (see article in this issue)

Much of the exchanges revolved around economic and other challenges Cuba is currently experiencing.

Our Cuban comrades explained that the US blockade was now biting even more in the context of the post-2008 global crisis.

They emphasised that it was not true that the government was firing half-a-million workers. These workers, they stressed, are being re-organised, and directed to other sectors of the economy, mainly food production, where they will be more productive.

Discussions on the re-organisation were taking place with trade unions and workers. The government is to continue with its social assistance to the affected workers. Those who do not take up the



SACP delegation leader cde Solly Mapaila and cde Yunus Carrim flank their Cuban host

jobs offered by government are free to become self-employed. The government has lifted restrictions in 178 areas. These include transport providers, bricklayers, stonemasons, plumbers, electricians, panel-beaters, shoe-repairers, hairdressers, shoe-makers, accountants and so on. People will also be allowed to own restaurants with up to 20 seats. They have to use labour from the owners' families, but they can also employ a limited number of people.

The changes to the economy, it was stressed, were directed at consolidating the Cuban revolution, and were not a deviation from socialism. The new conditions require adaptations to secure the socialist project.

There were also discussions on the current global terrain and the opportunities to advance socialism. The need for closer relations between the South African and Cuban communist parties was stressed. The delegations agreed to engage in more regular exchanges.

Another major theme of the visit was the need to step up global support for the

Cuban Five. South Africa has a key role to play in this regard, and as the SACP we committed ourselves to intensifying the campaign. The CCP believes that the legal courses open to free the Cuban Five are now almost exhausted and it is only through mass global pressure and appeals to the US authorities that the Cuban Five will be released. For the Cuban government, the release of the Five is of the utmost importance, as it is for progressives the world over.

The delegation was very impressed with the Cuban education and health systems, and found the visits to a primary school and polyclinic very useful. Perhaps the most inspiring part of our visit was meeting with members of a Committee for the Defence of the Revolution. It showed very clearly the popular base of the Cuban Revolution

Among the issues the parties agreed to:

- Enhance youth mobilisation and exchange through our youth-wings,
- Increase student exchanges for purposes of building a revolutionary consciousness among future workers and professionals
- Share our perspectives with broader constituencies of the international working class and labour movement,
- Attend each other's key political and commemorative events such as congresses, and May Day celebrations
- Further enhance the scope and depth of the solidarity movement with Cuba.

Cde Matlako is the SACP Politburo Secretary for International Relations

INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN

17 years on, the Cuban Five await justice

They gave the FBI information on planned terrorist activity – but the only people the FBI arrests were the Five

BY LEOGANG HOVEKA



Since the successful revolution in Cuba a large population of Cuban exiles has emerged in the US state of Florida in Miami. It is estimated that there are currently a million Cuban exiles living in and around the city of Miami.

Post the revolution, the US government has sought to undermine the Cuban government by various means including CIA sponsored invasions and terror attacks by Cuban exiles' groups such as Alpha 66, the F4 Commandos, the Cuban American National Foundation, and Brothers to the Rescue. The most famous attempt, in 1961, known as the Bay of Pigs Invasion, was the first significant attempt by US government-trained Cuban exiles to overthrow the government of Cde Fidel Castro. There have also been other subsequent attempts between the 1960s and the 70s. It is estimated by the Cuban Government that more than 3 478 deaths have been caused by CIA-linked Cuban-exile activities.

To protect its sovereignty and national security, Cuba developed an intelligence network to infiltrate these groups as part of its counter-terrorism measures. In the 1990s it sent five intelligence operatives, (the Cuban Five) Gerardo Hernández (cell leader), Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González and René González to investigate the activities of anti-Cuba groups Alpha 66, the F4 Commandoes, the Cuban American National



Telling it like it is: A pro-Cuban 5 protestor in the US

Foundation, and Brothers to the Rescue. During this operation, the Cuban government provided FBI investigators investigating the 1997 Havana bombings with information about these groups' activities. The FBI instead used this information to investigate the Cuban intelligence network in Miami, which led to the arrest of the five.

The Five were initially charged on 25 counts including false identification and espionage. Following media pressure, seven months after their arrests, they were also charged with conspiracy to commit murder for the bombing of a *Brothers to the Rescue* aircraft shot down by the Cuban air force for invading its airspace. Four US citizens died in the incident. It was alleged at the trial that information provided by the Five directly led to the bombing of the plane and hence they were responsible for murder.

Unfair trial

The trial of the Five lasted seven months

and was held in Miami, with a jury deciding on their guilt. Given the large Cuban exile community in Miami, and wide media coverage, the defence made an application to move the trial to another state as it was impossible to get an impartial jury in Miami. This was denied. It is alleged that out of a jury pool of 160, at least 10% had known the victims or trial witnesses.

During the trial the prosecution also made attempts to prevent the judge from instructing the jury that they would need to consider jurisdiction to secure a conviction for first degree murder – the bombing had taken place outside US jurisdiction.

In addition, the defence was denied access to evidence in the state's possession which included the Five's personal belongings and hand written notes – they had been classified as secret.

In 2005 a three-judge panel of the United State Courts of appeal unanimously found that the initial trial in Miami was unfair and prejudicial given the large number of the Cuban community in Miami. The judges ordered a retrial outside Miami. But the US government made a request for a review to a 10-judge panel which ruled against the review of the trial by an 8 to 2 majority.

In 2008 an appeal reviewed the sentences of two of the five while confirming the life sentences for Gerardo Hernandez, Antonio Guerrero and Rene Gonzalez.

Since the trial it has emerged that to bolster anti-Cuban sentiment during the trial, the US government paid several Spanish-speaking journalists between \$1 125 (R8213) to \$58 600 (R 417 818).



US protestors challenge ex-president George 'Dubya' Bush on the Cuban 5. His successor, President Barack Obama, has not acted to overturn their political imprisonment

It is also alleged that a “Bush-financed journalist”, conservative media personality Armstrong Williams, received \$240 000 (R 1,7-million) in payments” Gloria La Riva, the coordinator of the National Committee for the *Free the Five* Campaign in the US, has said that “during the pre-trial period there were hundreds of articles on the Cuban Five and not one was favourable”.

Human rights violations

Cde Gerardo Hernandez has alleged that following their arrest they were kept in solitary confinement for a period of 17 months. Correspondence and photographs of family members have been taken into evidence and classified as secret denying them access to these.

In 2003 the Cuban Five’s attempts at an appeal was frustrated by further months of solitary confinement and refusal of access to their lawyers. The wives of cdes René Gonzáles and Gerardo Hernández have also not been allowed visas to visit their husbands, a decision condemned by Amnesty International.

In May 2005, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights adopted a report by its Working Group on Arbitrary Detention that stated: “From the facts and circumstances in which the trial took place and from the nature of the charges

and the harsh sentences handed down to the accused that the trial did not take place in the climate of objectivity and impartiality that is required in order to conform to the standards of a fair trial as defined in article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which the United States of America is a party.”

It has been 12 years since the arrest of the Cuban Five and there has been growing international pressure on the US to release them. There are currently more than more than 300 committees in more than 100 countries campaigning for the release or fair trials for the Five which has created a wave of solidarity.

More than 10 noble laureates have signed “amicus curia” submissions to US courts supporting the release of the Five. More than 110 British MPs have written to the US Attorney General expressing their support for the Five.

In South Africa, cdes Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, Jacob Zuma and Max Sisulu have been among the leaders who have vocalised their support. The SACP, ANC and the Alliance are all campaigning for their release.

From a moral, legal and political stand point it is difficult to justify the US’ continued imprisonment of the Five.

Firstly, the trial is a political trial driv-

en by the US’ anti-communist stance and desire for regime change in Cuba. Given the US’ long history of difficult diplomatic relations and its capitalist interests it is unlikely that any Cuban could get a fair trial within the boundaries of the US.

Secondly, it is common cause that countries spy on each other for reasons of state security. No information released by the Cuban Five was used to commit a crime in the US and there was no direct evidence of a threat to US national security by the Five. They only sought to protect their country.

Thirdly, it is incorrect to charge the Five with murder because they provided information that a Brother’s for Peace plane would criminally invade Cuban airspace. In essence, the Five have been sentenced for murder for an act of self-defence and the desire to protect their countries national security.

Fourthly, the Cuban government provided the FBI with evidence, in good faith, dealing with terrorism. The FBI elected to use this to arrest the Five instead of fighting terrorism – to date the only arrests that have emanated from the report is that of the Five. The US should have no interest in intelligence activities that do not threaten its national security. ●

Cde Hoveka is a YCL activist

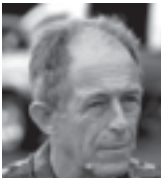
LOOKING BACK

PAST GENERAL SECRETARIES OF THE SACP

JIMMY SHIELDS, SECRETARY CPSA 1925 & 1927

Cde Jimmy: Dedicated to a non-racial, mass-based Party

BY HOWARD SMITH



Cde Jimmy Shields was born in 1900 in Greenock, Scotland, of Irish parents. He joined the Communist Party of

Great Britain in 1921 and remained a committed communist for 28 years until his death in 1949. Most of these years were spent in Britain engaged in international work, but between 1925 and 1927 he was in South Africa and active and influential in the leadership of the CPSA.

Some sources record him as Secretary of the Party between 1925 and 1927, but my research suggests that the role alternated between members of the leadership collective in the period from cde WH Andrews' resignation in February 1925 and cde DG Walton's election as Secretary at the seventh annual conference of December-January 1928-1929.

A Lerumo (Michael Harmel) in *Fifty Fighting Years* states that Shields "replaced" Andrews as Secretary. Cde Andrews resigned in February 1925, the same year Shields arrived in South Africa. In her biography of cde SP Bunting *Between Empire and Revolution*, Allison



Cde Jimmy Shields

Drew gives some detail of successive Party conferences in this period. She states that cde Eddie Roux became general secretary at the fourth national conference held in December 1925; cde S P Bunting continued as Chairman and editor of the Party's paper *The Internationalist*, and that cdes Jimmy and Violet Shields joined the central executive committee for the first time. Drew also records that cde Bunting took over as secretary in September 1926 when cde Roux left to study in England, and cde Shields took over editorship of the paper.

At the fifth national conference in January 1927, Drew lists cde Shields as chair and cde Bunting as general secretary. Later that year cde Douglas Walton, according to Drew, "had taken over as

secretary from Jimmy Shields when the Shieldses returned to Britain in November 1927". Sheridan Johns in *Raising the Red Flag* records that in February 1928 cde Walton was the "new" secretary of the CPSA, but it was only at the seventh annual conference of December 1928-January 1929 that cde Walton was elected to that position.

Assuming these authors' accounts and sources are correct, one can only conclude that at different periods of time between February 1925 and the end of 1929, the post of secretary of the CPSA was occupied by cdes Roux, Bunting, Walton and Shields. Of these, cde Shields appears to have acted as secretary and as the paper's editor as required by the collective leadership of the Central Committee, without ever having been elected by a conference to either position.

Shields and Party emphasis on work among Africans

The third national conference of the CPSA at the end of 1924 had adopted a resolution placing greater emphasis on work among Africans, stressing "the prime importance of mass organisation of labour (and) forwarding the industrial organisation of all sections of the workers, especially those hitherto unorgan-

ised (and stating that) the problems of the working class can only be solved by a United Front of all workers *irrespective of colour.*” Cde Andrews had been re-elected Secretary and editor of *The International*, and cde Bunting had been elected Chairman and cde Eddie Roux Vice-Chairman; both were leading advocates of work among Africans and building non-racialism of the Party. In February 1925 cde Andrews resigned both positions to concentrate on trade union work.

Cde Shields and cde Violet Shields, his wife, arrived in South Africa in 1925 from Scotland. Drew states that cde Shields was hoping that the milder climate would improve his health; other sources suggest he was, like many immigrants from depressed Britain at the time, seeking work. They threw themselves into local Party work and were soon facilitating processes in a Party undergoing significant reorganisation. Cdes Shields was a youthful 25 (compared to cde Andrews’ 55 years) and newly arrived in South Africa. Whether it was his youth and freedom from attachment to the established white South African labour movement, or the fact that he was appointed to fulfil a role working as part of the collective of strong communists in the Central Committee, it does seem that cde Shields was an enthusiastic and dedicated contributor to the shift in the Party’s emphasis that the third conference had initiated.

Under the direction of the Central Committee attention was directed to building trade unions amongst Africans. Party schools were established under the direction of the cde T W Thibedi. Considerable numbers of African workers and revolutionary intellectuals joined the Party at this time; among them were cdes Albert Nzula, Moses Kotane, J B Marks, E T Mofutsanyana, Johannes Nkosi, Gana Makabeni, Josie Mpana and others who were to play an outstanding role in the future of the liberation movement, trade union movement and the Party. In 1926 when cde Shields took over the editorship of the Party’s paper, it was renamed the *South African Worker* and began publishing articles by African writers, the first of these by cde T W Thibedi, reflecting the changing emphasis of the Party.

African Militancy

It was the period of the Pact Government formed by the Nationalist Party of Hertzog and its minority partner, the SA Labour Party, led by Cresswell. The Pact was pushing through the package of measures known as the Hertzog



The ICU’s Clements Kadalie forced communists out of the union: two years later it collapsed



Cdes JK Marks (top) and Moses Kotane joined the Party under cde Jimmy Shields

Bills that legislated the “colour bar” and forced divisions in trade union organisation in the name of “civilized labour”. At the same time the Native Administration Act was passed to tighten and extend state control over the lives and movements of Africans, segregationist policies against Indians were instituted, the limited African franchise in the Cape Province was abolished and coloured voting rights redefined. The framework of what was to become apartheid was being constructed. This racist and repressive programme of the government evoked a greater measure of unity among the oppressed peoples of South Africa than ever before.

The ANC summoned the National Convention in Bloemfontein (February 1926) and it and the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) led by cde Clements Kadalie uncompromisingly rejected the Hertzog Bills. The Party called on African organisations to work for a general strike in protest against them.

At the end of 1926, cde Kadalie forced a split with the communists, excluding party members from holding office in the ICU. It was the beginning of a process to turn the ICU towards ‘sensible, moderate’ trade unionism, rejecting the radical political content that had drawn Africans into it in the tens of thousands country-wide. Within two years the ICU had fragmented and collapsed. But from it came a cadreship that set to work to organise industrial trade unions for African workers on sound and militant lines and to build the national liberation movement.

By 1927 the Party was enjoying good relations with the ANC. Cde JJ Gumede, Congress President, attended the International Congress of the League against Imperialism in Brussels in February 1927. At the ANC annual conference in June that year his presidential report included this tribute to the Party: “Of all political parties, the Communist Party is the only one that honestly and sincerely fights for the oppressed people”. Cde Gumede’s militant policies had the confidence of the ANC Conference which re-elected him as President-General and cde E J Khaile, who had been expelled from the ICU for refusing to resign from the CPSA, as Secretary-General.

The Party’s shift of emphasis, initiated by the resolutions of the Third Congress in 1924, had borne some fruit. The Party was growing and its composition was transformed: from a minority in 1924, African Communists by 1928 comprised the great majority – 1 600 out of

1 750 members. This coincided with cde Shields' role in leading positions in the Party, but he was not satisfied that the transformation was adequately reflected in the leadership, policy and perspectives. Responding to Shields' proposal that Africans be drawn into the leadership, the fifth national conference elected cdes Thibedi, Makabeni and E J Khaile (Secretary-General of the ANC) to the Central Committee, but the officials were all whites as was the delegation appointed to attend the Sixth Congress of the Communist International in Moscow in July 1928.

Shields the Communist in Britain

Cde Shields' participation in these developments in the CPSA and progressive politics in South Africa ended when in November 1927 he and cde Violet returned to Scotland. In Britain he continued as an active member of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB). In 1931 he went to London to work on the staff of the *Daily Worker*, the CPGB's paper, and was its editor from 1933 to 1935.

In 1932 he made the first of several visits to Moscow as the British representative to the Comintern. From 1931, he was a member of the Central and Political Committees of the CPGB, and from 1937 was also chair of the Control Commission, the Party's highest disciplinary body. In addition, he was a member of the CPGB's International Committee, and later assumed responsibility for this area of work and became widely known in anti-colonial circles.

In the 1930s his contribution to strengthening the anti-colonial movement across the British Empire and to

Britain's MI5 spy agency hounded him until his death in 1949

the developing the anti-fascist movement in Europe earned him the attention of the British Secret Service, MI5. Recently opened MI5 records reveal their interest in many aspects of his work. They knew his assistant at the International Department, cde Eileen Palmer (Eileen Bolton), was travelling extensively on Party business, possibly in a courier role that may have involved the funding of colonial freedom movements and/or underground anti-fascist groups in central Europe. MI5 also suspected cde Shields of being responsible for organising a clandestine wireless station, used for maintaining contact with Comintern headquarters. For all these reasons, MI5 felt completely justified in keeping an extensive surveillance of cde Shields' activities, including intercepted correspondence, phone calls and recorded conversations.

The MI5 files show how cde Shields maintained links with the Soviet embassy during the Second World War, and it is now certain that the Security Service was employing a double agent, "M/7", to feed information to cde Shields which he then passed on to the Soviet Union.

To what end this intense invasion of

privacy served is now less clear than it arguably once was. What it confirms is that Shields' active commitment to communism first demonstrated in his role in South Africa continued in his contribution to liberation movements in the colonies and in confronting fascism in Europe.

Sadly, at some point during his many foreign visits, cde Shields had contracted tuberculosis. For an extended period after World War II, his illness confined him to Kelling Sanatorium in Norfolk. Even there, his every communication continued to be monitored by MI5. When he died in 1949, it was in obscurity, his isolation as a TB sufferer and the hounding and pressure of MI5's surveillance since 1935 having inexorably driven him out of public life. ●

Cde Smith is active in the SACP Jack Simons branch and Brian Bunting (Cape Metro) District

Sources and Further Reading

Lerumo, A. (Harmel, M.): *Fifty Fighting Years: The South African Communist Party 1921-1971*. Inkululeko Publications. London, 1971.

Jones, S. *Raising the Red Flag: The International Socialist League and the Communist Party of South Africa 1914-1932*. Mayibuye Books UWC. Bellville, 1995.

Drew, A. *Between Empire and Revolution: A Life of Sidney Bunting, 1873-1936*. Unisa Press. 2009.

Communist Biographies: Jimmy Shields. Available at http://www.grahamstevenson.me.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=798:jimmy-shields&catid=19:s&Itemid=105

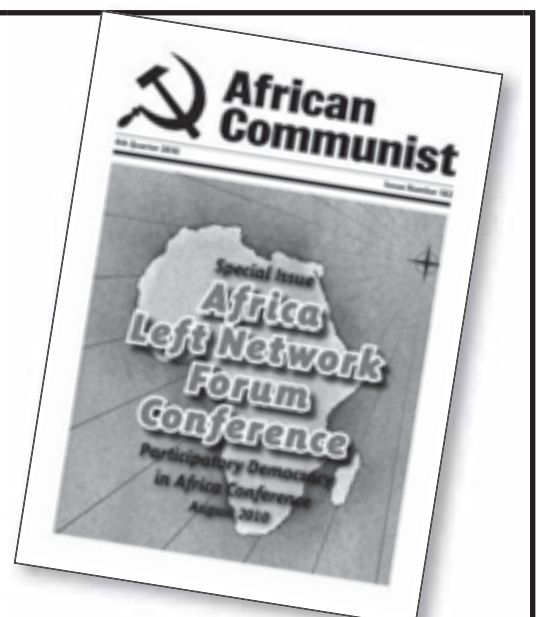


The African Communist

ISSUE 182 4TH QUARTER 2010

SPECIAL ISSUE – AFRICA LEFT NETWORK FORUM CONFERENCE / PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA CONFERENCE

Reports on the status of Left formations in: Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, DRC, Zambia, Lesotho, Swaziland, Chad and Namibia



SWAZILAND

Mswati's regime's brutality continues – but solidarity work shows results

Stronger efforts to expose the truth, to lobby for sanctions and extend the solidarity work – and to get resources to progressive Swazi organisations

BY MARK WALLER

The dire situation in Swaziland is quickly intensifying for both the liberation movement and the country's people. The pro-democracy front of organisations that constitutes the liberation movement is facing tighter repression, as its cause becomes more vocal inside the tiny nation and stimulates more active solidarity internationally.

At a broader level, most of the roughly 1-million population – the majority of whom live in impoverished rural areas – face relentless oppression. Almost 70% are ruthlessly subjected to poverty, disease and inadequate access to health, education and nutrition by the autocratic regime of King Mswati III, Africa's last unconstitutional and absolute monarch.

The Mswati court, packed with wives, the queen mother, princes and princesses ensconced in palaces of their own, squats on Swaziland like a giant tick, gorging itself on the country's fast-depleting wealth and capacity. The royal court and the rest of the regime show callous indifference to the sufferings of the majority of the population. Together with the ruling political system that sustains it, it is the core reason for the people's terrible deprivation.

By diverting cash to support its own luxurious lifestyle and away from the needs of the people, it is in large part responsible for why the country's HIV-

Aids rate (over 26% among adults) is the world's highest and people's life expectancy is one of the world's lowest (32 years). Thanks to the Mswati regime, about a quarter of the population rely on food aid from the UN Food Programme, despite the fact that Swaziland is classed as a middle-income country, and regardless of the great stretches of beautifully fertile countryside locked up as 'crown' estates.

But it would be wrong to see Swaziland as some weird feudal remnant – though like many countries (the UK, for instance), it does contain feudal leftovers. Swaziland is squarely capitalist in the form and character of its key areas of production, distribution and exchange. Manufacturing and intensive agricultural business might be skewed to providing a slice of their ownership and takings to the bloated autocracy, but otherwise they function totally within local and global capitalist practices.

The Mswati court squats on Swaziland like a giant tick, gorging itself on the country's fast-depleting wealth and capacity

The country's middle-income status is derived largely from agriculture, forestry and mining (13% of GDP), and textile manufacturing and sugar production (37% of GDP). Its export markets in sugar and textiles with the US and the EU accelerated in the early 2000s, and have been pumped up by preferential trading agreements. The strongest export and import markets are with South Africa, allowing Swaziland a level of economic balance that it would have lacked if it had been located on some forsaken geo-economic periphery. Though no longer booming, business in Swaziland is securely locked onto a trajectory fully recognisable within today's phase of late capitalism/globalised imperialism.

The Swazi ruling class, apart from the monarchy, does not derive its power from its hold on arable land as the prime source of wealth accumulation, as it would if it were a feudal kingdom. Industry and intensive agriculture, the existence of capitalist elites and an oppressed working class put Swaziland very much in the modern world.

True, capitalism coexists with a grotesque expression of an ostensibly 'traditional African' royal rule, but then capitalism has always favoured whatever system best allows it to get on with its job – from fascism to social democracy to oligarchy.

There is a limit to this, however, when government, demography and developments resulting directly from the

behaviour of the ruling class put a brake on capitalist economic growth. In this case, Swaziland's autocracy has become increasingly an obstacle to profit-driven enterprise. The effects of mass poverty, the depletion of the working population due to the HIV pandemic, declining subsistence agriculture and increasing social dysfunction are all outcomes of the regime's negligence and inability to act against crises.

The recent collapse of SAPPI Usutu, the country's only pulp mill, and Swazi Paper Mills are largely due to the government's hopeless spending directed by the monarch. Mswati III is determined to bulldoze ahead with the mother of all vanity projects, the building of the Sikhupe international airport at a cost of about R500-million. Swaziland already has a perfectly good, though very under-used, international airport at Matshapha.

The plan is that the new airport will handle about 300 000 passengers a year arriving on long-haul 747 flights. It has been marketed as offering a gateway to South Africa's and Swaziland's tourist destinations, and a sure way for Swaziland to ride the wave of golden opportunities whipped up by the 2010 World Cup. But the Sikhupe project missed the World Cup – it was supposed to be ready by May this year – and is still far from complete and now can't pay its construction workers.

Autocratic rule in Swaziland rests on an abstruse government system vamped up in 1973 from the old system of traditional councils, tinkhundla. This new tinkhundla government was put in place by Mswati III's predecessor King Sobhuza II, and accompanied by rulings that prohibited political parties and outlawed free political activity. Swaziland's new 2005 constitution upholds this system, for instance meaninglessly allowing only individuals to stand for election and not political parties. At the same time, culture and tradition are abused by the regime to justify the existence of the Mswati autocracy. One instance of this is the fact that young women who do not take part in the annual Reed Dance may find that they do not get bursaries for higher education.

If the current trend in Swaziland is increasingly unfavourable to capitalism, it is even more aggressively turned against progressive forces in the country. The banned People's United Democratic Movement (Pudemo), the Swaziland Youth Congress (Swayoco), the

The government is on the defensive from an emboldened opposition – underground and open

Swaziland People's Liberation Army (Umbane), and the Swaziland Solidarity Network (SSN) were all declared "terrorist entities" in November 2008, three months after the entry into force of the Suppression of Terrorism Act. Members of these organisations and of other barely-tolerated civil society organisations, including trade unions, are routinely persecuted. Shortly after May Day this year trade unionist and political activist Cde Siphos Steven Jele was murdered in police custody after being arrested for wearing a Pudemo T-shirt.

The last few years have seen a steady growth of protest and opposition against the dictatorship and of solidarity from progressive forces outside Swaziland, which I won't detail here. At present the Swazi government is increasingly being put on the defensive by a more emboldened opposition movement. Rather like the United Democratic Front of South Africa's anti-apartheid struggle years, the Swaziland United Democratic Front (SUDF) is carrying on the liberation fight above-ground while Pudemo has to operate underground, as did the ANC. The Swaziland Democracy Campaign (SDC) currently coordinates Global Weeks of Action on Swaziland (GWOAS).

The first of these was in September this year, with follow-ups in November and beyond. The September GWOAS was attended by internationalists from South Africa and Europe, who were assaulted and deported by the Swazi police. They were among 78 people who were detained on the eve of demonstration marches through Mbabane and Manzini.

Pudemo leader cde Mario Masuku and Swayoco leader cde Wandile Dlodlu were also forcibly prevented from joining the marches. Amnesty International condemned "the unlawful arrests, detentions and use of violence by the security forces to intimidate and disrupt peaceful protest activities". Following the protests, Prime Minister Barnabas Sibusiso Dlamini said the police should consider

using 'sipakatane', the beating or whipping of the soles of the feet, to punish pro-democracy activists. He denounced the involvement of foreign workers and solidarity organisations as "undue interference in the internal affairs of Swaziland".

Much of the visible day-to-day struggle in Swaziland, meanwhile, takes place through the Swazi trade union movement, in particular the National Public Services and Allied Workers Union (NP-SAWU), which has a high profile role in the GWOAS events. Though the unions are forced to steer clear of issues that the authorities consider to be political, the bread-and-butter struggles they are tackling have a clear political thrust and importance in the current situation. The ongoing case (at the time of writing) where government has tried to end overtime work shifts by fire fighters and has brought in soldiers with no prior fire-fighting training to run fire stations is one of many labour struggles where the unions emerge as principled defenders of workers against a brutish and inept government.

The government has tried to clamp down on political activity by outlawing public servants from taking part in any form of political work, under the Public Service Bill. "This bill is merely an extension of the previous Suppression of Terrorism Act," said Pudemo Cde Secretary-General Siphasha Dlamini in early October. "It is targeted at members of Pudemo and the trade union movement, and the thinking seems to be that if they don't get us with the Suppression of Terrorism Act, then they'll hit us with the Public Service Bill."

At the same time, the tinkhundla government is hastily putting up window dressing to appear to the outside world that Swaziland actually has immaculate democratic credentials. According to cde Siphasha Dlamini, though, the government is piloting a bill that ostensibly makes way for the registration of political parties, it does not do away with existing prohibitions on parties. "The aim is to allow non-oppositionist parties, and to further exclude forces that want a full multiparty democracy."

The murder of Cde Siphos Steven Jele and the clampdown on Swazi and foreign activists who attended the September GWOAS drew further foreign media and civil society attention to Swaziland, and there was heavy condemnation of the regime from many sides, including Cosatu and the SACP.



Defiant SUDF protestors demanding democracy in Swaziland demonstrate during the GWoAS action in September

In response, the Swazi government appears to have tried to clean up its image in early October by organising for Prime Minister Dlamini to receive a “World Citizen Award of Excellence” from an organisation called World Citizen Awards International, based in the Bahamas. A Swazi government press release said the PM is “a highly respected global figure whose role in history has been significant”. The citation for the award was later altered to being for the Swazi nation as a whole “for combating the scourge of the AIDS virus”. But the award turned out to be a sham and a public relations blunder by the Swazi regime. According to the Bahaman newspaper, *The Tribune*, the Swazi authorities paid the notorious Bahaman conman, Rudy King, to set it up for the PM.

There is also little the regime can do to rescue its image in other respects. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank have refused to back Swaziland’s application for funding from the African Development Bank, and the European Union has recently refused to grant budget support to Swaziland because of the government’s “ineligibility”, an apparent euphemism for

mismanagement.

IMF-approved funding would not have been good news for the Swazi people, as it would entail the customary IMF conditions of cutting public spending and taxing the poor. But the red card to Swaziland is a sign of growing impatience over its wasteful practices, which have included awarding ministers hefty pay increases. The EU has said it would only give project funding for water, health and education, under the EU-Swaziland multi-annual country strategy for the period 2008-2013. At the same time, the regime in Swaziland has to cope with a 50% drop in revenue transfers from the Southern African Customs Union, which before this year accounted for some 60% of total government revenue.

“I think that we’re seeing some defi-

There is little the Mswati regime can do to rescue its reputation and image

nite progress in the way the international community treats Swaziland,” said Dumezweni Dlamini of the Foundation for Social and Economic Justice, which is active in the SUDF and SDC. “There is a reluctance to bail the country out financially. But ultimately the solution to the problems has to come from united organisations in Swaziland themselves, in terms of a democratic adjustment. No amount or economic adjustment alone will work.”

All of which suggests that solidarity with Swaziland’s liberation movement needs stronger and more concerted efforts. According to activists in the country, these need to focus on a number of levels: to expose the truth about the Mswati regime to the rest of the world, to lobby for sanctions and boycotts of Swaziland, to get resources for progressive organisations inside the country and in exile, to extend the SSN’s network internationally and to coordinate international solidarity work.

Cde Waller is South African correspondent for Tiedonantaja, the weekly paper of the Communist Party of Finland, and a freelance writer

SACP membership grows – 116 000 and counting!

December 2010

Voice of the South African Communist Party

Unsebenzi



25 FIGHTING YEARS!
We congratulate Cosatu
on its 25th anniversary