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Voice of the South African Communist Party

Unsebenzi

THE ECONOMY

**IT'S CAPITALISM'S
CRISIS: SO WHY
SHOULD WE HAVE
TO PAY FOR IT?**



THE ELECTION

**TOWARDS
22 APRIL: IT'S
TIME TO DEFEND
AND ADVANCE
OUR DEMOCRATIC GAINS**

CAPITALISM'S CRISIS

It's their crisis – so who's going to have to pay to solve it?

Extract from the February Political Report to the Central Committee of the SACP

We are in the midst of the worst global capitalist crisis since the early 1930s. Banks (like the century-old Lehman Brothers in the United States) that were supposed to be “too big to fail” have evaporated into thin air, leaving behind a trail of toxic debt. Other banks (like Northern Rock in the UK) have had to be rescued through “nationalisation” bail-outs.

It is a crisis that began in the financial sector of the core economies of global capitalism. But it is no longer only a financial crisis – it is an all-round economic crisis striking at the heart of capitalist production itself. Recession has become the global norm. Tens of thousands of mines and factories are closing down or operating far below capacity. More than twenty million jobs have been shed in the past three months in China alone.

This crisis is not an accident. Nor is it merely the result of capitalist greed, or management corruption, or bad decisions taken by the US Federal Reserve. There has been plenty of greed, corruption, and many bad decisions. But the present crisis has its roots deep in the very nature of capitalism itself.

For more than 30 years, there have been falling rates of profit in the core economies of the capitalist world (notably the US). This has led to growing financialisation of these economies, as capital was taken out of production and into speculative activity.

Over the last decades, world capitalism has been structured around an unsus-

tainable reality:

- the mass production of commodities for export in the key semi-peripheral societies – notably the cheap labour economies of China and India - and reckless oil extraction in Third World states, on the one hand; and

- unsustainable consumption levels in core capitalist countries, propped up by financial bubbles of all kinds, especially in the United States, on the other hand.

This was the global “engine of growth” that we were told (in GEAR and elsewhere) would catapult the South African economy into sustained 6% growth – provided, of course, we created “an investor friendly climate”. The neo-liberals boasted that capitalism had finally overcome its tendency to have booms and busts. From now on, we were led to believe, it was upwards ever, backwards never.

That bubble has burst. The bottom of

The whole of humanity is already paying for it. But in the coming weeks, months and years an intensified global class struggle will determine who carries the major burden

the global recession is still far from being reached. Tens of millions of more jobs will be lost around the world. More firms will go belly up. As with all previous global capitalist crises, there will be no recovery until there has been the mass destruction of value. Capitalism can only recover from its serious busts through the wholesale destruction of accumulated capital – the destruction of firms, share-values, savings, and jobs.

It is capitalism's crisis...but who will pay for it?

In one sense, the whole of humanity is already paying for it. But in the coming weeks, months and years an intensified global class struggle will determine who carries the major burden. Class struggle will also determine the trajectory with which the world finally emerges from this crisis. Will it be a more socialist-oriented and environmentally-friendly trajectory based on human need? Or will it be back to square one, to repeat the same boom and bust cycle? Will it be a descent into barbarism?

In this regard, we should never forget that capitalism only emerged from the last great global crisis (1929 – early 1930s), by plunging the world into war. Faced with recession in the early 1930s, many leading capitalist countries chose national re-armament, military expansionism, and fascist barbarism as their “stimulus packages”. It was only out of the ruins of the ensuing Second World War, that a crisis-ridden global capitalism was finally able to embark upon its golden era of sus-

tained growth (1945 -1973).

The major “stimulus” packages currently being announced in the developed capitalist countries fortunately do not yet show signs of a flirtation with fascist barbarism. They represent, rather, an attempt to rescue national capitalist firms and national living standards. While some of the pain is spread across these societies, the rescue packages are essentially about bailing out capitalist companies, while the debt is placed onto the shoulders of the public (and particularly future generations of Americans, etc.) This is the meaning of bank “nationalisations”. They are the socialisation of debt. They are conceived of as temporary interventions to ensure liquidity in the national market. The intention is to hand back these banks to the private sector when profitability is restored.

A second leg of these “stimulus” packages is major national protectionist measures for national industries (and national jobs). Productive investments in the South are being withdrawn, already paltry aid packages are diminishing, and market access for commodities from the South are further restricted.

However, it is doubtful whether these various stimulus packages will actually succeed in restoring profitability to the heartlands of capitalism. They are certainly not addressing the underlying structural problems in the global capitalist economy.

But, while the capitalist class still has the upper-hand in the developed centres of capitalism, popular forces are stirring across the globe. Just in the last several weeks, we have seen major popular unrest, protests and mass action in Greece, Russia, Latvia, Great Britain, France, China, South Korea, Guadeloupe (a month-long general strike), Reunion, Madagascar, Mexico and Ireland. In a hitherto slumbering Iceland, popular protests have brought down a neo-liberal government.

What are the threats and challenges we face in South Africa? How are we responding? Is our recently announced budget an adequate response? And what of the framework plan to confront the international crisis, announced jointly by government, the unions and business?

One thing is clear. We must vigilantly assert one basic principle:

We will not allow the workers and the poor once more to bear the brunt of capitalism’s crisis! Socialism is the future! Build it now! ●

CAPITALISM’S CRISIS

... and how should South Africa respond?

Extract from the February Political Report to the Central Committee of the SACP

Official confirmation that 36 500 jobs have been lost in the mining and auto sectors since last July, and that SA’s economy shrank by 1,8% in the last quarter of 2008 – the biggest drop in 16 years – have underlined the point the SACP has been making consistently: despite boasts that we were still hearing just a few months ago, SA’s economy is actually very vulnerable to the present global crisis.

It is true no economy in the world is likely to escape the negative effects of the meltdown. It is also true that SA is not the most vulnerable of economies. But we have a degree of exposure that could have been considerably less if correct policies had been pursued after 1994. Much of the blame for our current exposure must lie with the failure to transform the systemic features of SA’s capitalist economy.

For more than 100 years, the SA economy has been excessively dependent on primary commodity exports. This dependence has been driven by (and has resulted in) a very high level of concentration and dominance over our economy by the big mining houses, closely linked to

the major financial institutions. This is what we refer to as the domination by the “mineral-energy and finance” complex. This high level of concentration and domination has served, generally, to choke off effective and balanced development in our manufacturing sector. As a result, our economy is also excessively reliant on imports of luxury goods and capital goods (machinery and technology).

Despite SA’s relative levels of development, we have many of the features of a classical neo-colonial economy. We are highly exposed to volatility in the “commodity” markets (on global demand for our minerals – gold, platinum, iron ore, coal, etc.). When there is global recession, our exports and our job market are heavily hit, as at present. But even when there is a commodity boom (as there has been over the past several years), growth in the SA economy sucks in luxury and capital goods imports. And, since the terms of trade between primary commodities (which we export) and luxury and capital goods (which we tend to import) are largely unfavourable – our trade balance has long been a point of serious vulnerability, even in good times.

To compensate for this balance of payments vulnerability by attracting foreign money into SA, the Reserve Bank and Treasury have maintained relatively high interest rates. But these relatively high interest rates have, in turn, further served to constrain economic development in our country, particularly in the critical labour-intensive manufacturing, small-scale farming, and service sectors. What is more, the foreign investments that we have tended to attract have been largely speculative “hot money”. To further cre-

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ate an “investor friendly” climate we have also liberalised our trade regime (far beyond what was required of developing countries), and we have relaxed exchange controls (26 times since 1996), leaving only residual control measures in place.

All of these interventions, which were designed to attract foreign capital into SA, have tended to have the perverse effect of encouraging major SA companies to disinvest out of SA, to de-list from the JSE, or to establish secondary listings in London and New York. At present, the major contributor to our current account imbalance is not so much our imports, but the major outflow of dividend payments to shareholders in the US, UK, Europe, etc. This problem is now being made worse by the outflow of “hot money” from all developing economies (including SA) back to the developed economies. This, too, is perverse. It is, after all, the economies of the advanced capitalist countries that are particularly affected by the present recession. It underlines the fact that, despite all the rhetoric about “free markets”, and global liberalisation, imperialism remains a dominant reality. When the chips are down, the major US and UK financial institutions headquartered in the North pull back and seek to save their own economies first.

Where does that leave us?

The first step is to acknowledge that, despite so-called “unprecedented” and “sustained” growth since 1994, and despite the recent global commodity boom, the growth path upon which our economy has been located over the past 15 years has failed. It has failed to create jobs in sufficient numbers. And it has failed to dent the legacy of gross inequality in our country. It has left us vulnerable.

Faced with the crisis we have to follow a two-track approach:

- We need to introduce immediate **defensive** measures; and, linked to these

- We need to pursue an **offensive** strategy that begins, progressively, to transform our neo-colonial capitalist growth path.

Defensive measures

The Nedlac Task Force’s “Framework for a South African response to the international economic crisis” begins to provide an important outline of immediate defensive measures. We will need to consider some financial assistance to key strategic industries, in exchange for firm commitments to job protection. However, we

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simply do not have the resources to remotely match the scale of bail-outs in the advanced capitalist countries.

Instead, as the Nedlac Task Force recognises, we will need to focus largely on non-financial support measures, among them:

- **Trade remedies** – tough anti-dumping measures; countervailing duties; judicious application of new tariffs (for which there is space in terms of WTO rules); more vigorous policing of our borders to deal with illegal imports;

- **Vigorous promotion of the Proudly SA Campaign** – and securing procurement agreements in terms of it.

Offensive measures – transforming our growth path

Fortunately, as a result of protracted struggles from within the ANC-led alliance, we have begun to see important policy shifts in government. In particular, there is now an appreciation that the democratic state has to be an active player in the economy – as a planner and as a leader in developing an industrial policy (working together with social partners in what is a mixed economy); as an investor through the budget and through development finance institutions (like the DBSA, Land Bank, and IDC); as a job creator and employer; and as a driver of infrastructure investment through strategic state-owned enterprises (SOEs). Economic development and transformation cannot be abandoned to market whims.

This is what we mean by a democratic developmental state.

And it is this kind of developmental state – which we are now beginning to see in practice – that is protecting the SA

economy from the very worst of the global melt-down. It is no accident that the key sector of sustained growth in an otherwise generally gloomy South African picture remains construction – thanks to our massive state-led infrastructure programme.

It is also no accident that this year’s budget has a strategic orientation that is different in emphasis from the “stimulus” packages emanating from the US and other developed economies. Our 2009/10 budget seeks to sustain major infrastructure spending over the coming years. It envisages a major increase in public sector employment (teachers, health-workers, police), and the massification of the expanded public works programmes. It also commits to sustaining and extending the already extensive (if patchy) social security net.

In the advanced capitalist countries, the political response to the meltdown is fundamentally to rescue failing companies by providing greater state-backed liquidity. There, governments are stepping in as “lenders of last resort”. In SA, the emphasis is on the state as a “producer” and even as an “employer of last resort”.

For the SACP, we hope to consolidate this trend, pointing out the appropriate lessons to be learnt from the current global capitalist crisis and its impact on our society. In the long run, only a socialist economy will be able to place SA on a sustainable development path. And a socialist economy is one in which the broad public sector (including cooperatives) is the producer and employer not just of last resort, but increasingly also of FIRST resort.

The policy shifts are welcome, but are they enough?

The SACP has generally welcomed the 2009/10 budget. But there are some flashing red lights we need to heed. While Cde Trevor Manuel’s budget speech struck many positive notes about getting the productive economy, including agriculture, working more effectively, some of the spending trends suggest a different story.

The budget allocation for the Department of Trade and Industry actually decreases (2008/9 – R6,36-billion, versus 2009/10 – R5,7-billion), and that of agriculture is also marginally down (2009/9 – R2,8-billion, 2009/10 – R2,79-billion.)

Admittedly, headline figures like these do not necessarily tell the full story. A decrease might mask the reallocation of

funding to more strategic programmes within departments. In the case of agriculture, a revamped and dynamised Land Bank should be able to spur transformation with funding that is off the national budget, for instance.

Nonetheless, concern about the degree of clarity on the transformation of our productive economy is further deepened by some of the more general strategic points announced by Cde Manuel in his budget speech.

For instance, he said the budget was guided by “five enduring principles” – the fourth of which was: *“Addressing the barriers to competitiveness that limit equitable sharing opportunities”*. Certainly, the collusive and/or market-dominant, rent-seeking conduct of the big corporations in our country (particularly those in the mining, financial, energy and agro-processing sectors) has reinforced our neo-colonial growth path. This “uncompetitive” behaviour has certainly undermined labour-intensive light manufacturing and small farming, for instance. The work of the Competitions Commission is important in this regard. But it would be a grave error to reduce industrial policy to “addressing the barriers to competitiveness” as Treasury sometimes tends to do. It would be an even greater error to imagine that a more competitive environment would somehow create a more equitable and sharing society.

Transforming our neo-colonial growth path – or preparing for the next commodity boom?

We have to use the current crisis as an opportunity to place SA on a radically trans-

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sformed growth path, in which there is:

- A far more balanced development across sectors, with a particular emphasis on labour intensive sectors like light manufacturing, small farming, and low-end services;

- A greater focus on our domestic and regional market;

- A greater focus on South-South trade;

- A preparedness to introduce trade and financial measures that protect our own key sectors – including tariffs, tighter control over importers, and more effective financial flow controls (including speed-bumps on the movement of “hot money” and dividend payouts to foreign shareholders).

- A comprehensive and critical review of the compradorist and parasitic features of narrow BEE. Some 80% of BEE deals

are now under the water as projected dividend and share-value earnings have crashed. Many of these deals have the makings of a local sub-prime crisis.

- A macro-economic policy package that supports this overall strategic focus and ensures longer-term sustainability.

In welcoming the many important shifts that have occurred in economic policy, we need to continue coming back to the underlying strategic question: what are we trying to do?

Is our continued commitment, for instance, to state-led infrastructure development fundamentally about the transformation of our historical, neo-colonial growth path?

Or are we building rail-lines, airports, freeways, ports, electricity-generation capacity, and publicly-owned oil refineries so we are ready to offer a “competitive” environment to the same bunch of multinationals when the next commodity boom comes around?

It is not clear that a vision of long-term transformation is yet sufficiently shared within our country, or even within our Alliance.

The consolidation and implementation of a coherent transformational economic programme has now become the critical challenge of our time.

This is a capitalist crisis – our answer is:

Together, let us transform South Africa’s neo-colonial capitalist growth path!

Socialism is the future ...together, let us begin to build it now! ●

Central Committee campaigns in Alex

The SACP Central Committee and over 300 other SACP activists descended on the Johannesburg township of Alexandra on 1 March to intensify the SACP’s election campaign for an overwhelming ANC victory in the 22 April elections. The SACP activists distributed the Party’s new pamphlet “6 Reasons Why You Should Vote ANC” and did door-to-door work.

SACP General Secretary Blade Nzimande addressed a meeting of residents of the Helen Joseph Women’s Hostel, and was enthusiastically received.

He deplored the state in which the hostels are.

“Fifteen years into our democracy this is completely unacceptable. It feels like these hostels are just like they

were under apartheid. We will raise this with the municipality.” He said that he was aware that the municipality was planning to upgrade the hostels. The SACP would come back to the hostel residents and brief them on this.

Cde Nzimande urged the residents to vote for the ANC. He said he was aware that jobs are a big issue for them – and stressed that the ANC has made jobs a major priority in its Manifesto.

The SACP activists were well received by the Alexandra residents, most of whom made it clear that they would vote for the ANC. The SACP’s election campaign is to be intensified in the weeks ahead. ●

CAPITALISM'S CRISIS

SACP must shape the economic policies of the Alliance

The previous leadership's neo-liberal policies failed the country – particularly the workers and the poor

By Phel Parkies,
SACP Free State Provincial Secretary



Phel Parkies

A major issue within the Alliance and which is going to keep us busy over the next five years and more is economic policy.

The SACP Free State Provincial Council discussed this in October 2008 and agreed that conditions are much better for achieving consensus on economic policy within the Alliance now that Cde Thabo Mbeki is not at the head of the ANC and government. He and his allies within the Alliance relied on neo-liberal policies that have failed the country, particularly the working class and the poor.

Since 1994 the main contestation and point of divergence on economic policy has centred on the marginalisation of the input from the SACP and Cosatu. The recommendations of the last Mbeki-appointed panel which comprised economists and academics with a neo-liberal orientation were simply another dose of conservative neo-liberal policies. These neo-liberal policies incorporate a modelling exercise which encourages economic adjustment based on fiscal policy (cuts in government expenditure or an increase on taxation) and undermines social and infrastructure expenditure.

The proposals from the panel seek to

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ensure that macroeconomic policy instruments are recalibrated to facilitate an export-led growth path and to maintain a “pro-cyclical” fiscal policy as opposed to counter cyclical policy (expanding the economy when it is already growing) with competitive exchange rates (which have been over-valued making exports too expensive and imports cheap) and a budget surplus and widening of the current account deficit (more imports than exports to meet excessive demand). Clearly the current path has not succeeded in building a developmental state. It has instead resulted in high inflation rates, high rates of unemployment and poor quality jobs with low wages.

There is clear evidence that the blind laws of the market have failed the United States financial system because its neo-liberal macroeconomic straight jacket subjects the workers to unfair competition on trade and palpable class exploitation.

As the Communist Party, we are at the zenith to promote changes to the current economic orientation.

We believe that

- The resolutions of the 2008 Alliance economic summit should be implemented as soon as possible.

- Public discourse should also incorporate perspectives of the Party's medium-term vision

- It is important to contest ideas that neo-liberal conservative policies would be the panacea for our social ills.

- Economic policy should serve as the thread to locate reform on trade and industrial policy with the understanding that all sectors of the economy are not isolated from each other

- The current tariff structure has been more favourable to the capital-intensive sectors

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The SACP Free State PEC agreed that “the SACP must never fail ...to critically raise hard-line ideological issues in pursuit of its goals, irrespective of the strategic or tactical considerations. This is the only ideological compass that we have for the working class, whose incessant voice must always prevail where ideological precision is essential”.

It is from this vantage point that the SACP cannot disguise its ideological stance in society particularly in the current phase where poverty, social inequalities and underdevelopment have reached such high levels. While the authorities currently responsible for economic planning are linked to a voracious accumulation path, the Left seeks to pursue economic self sufficiency policies.

The SACP opposes the variant of rightwing reformism that sees the stabilisation of economic growth within the capitalist-oriented NDR as a necessary condition for redistribution and state-led service delivery. Some political charlatans, such as Terror Lekota, see themselves as champions of the Freedom Charter, and exponents of the aspirations of the people. However when they had their chance in government to articulate and implement the vision of this people’s programme contained in the Freedom Charter, they failed to do so. Their current claims are nothing more than political opportunism.

As in the Freedom Charter, the Party calls for the nationalisation – the re-nationalisation of Sasol and Mittel steel is a strategic necessity. We need real economic empowerment that elevates and empowers the working class and changes the production relations, and does not encourage elite enrichment.

At the recent policy conference, the SACP called for the strengthening of the planning and coordination capacity

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within the state. It is our opinion that this has been the weakest link in our government implementation, allowing national treasury to play the role of “planner in chief”.

A number of imperatives arise:

- real focus on capacity development at the local state level

- serious social investment in physical infrastructure- road, rail, harbour and public facilities – in particular health clinics and hospitals and schools

- the expansion of the role of the public sector with the state as a pivotal element in job creation and fighting poverty

- the strengthening of the role of the state on capital control and workers’ pension funds to ensure local investment as part of mobilisation of resources for domestic investment

- systematic and holistic approach to skills analysis with impetus to develop skills and training in different sectors of our economy

- processing of our own minerals encouraging beneficiation as an important component of economic development strategy to enhance growth.

The SACP policy conference was the po-

litical platform at which set the pace and direction on major policy choices for the SACP was decided. Political discussions at the policy conference were frank; debates covered the full spectrum of current political issues. It is therefore our duty at the Provincial Working Committee to debate these, endorse the decisions and to ensure that decisions are put into action.

Initially the discussions at the conference were distracted by the appointments of the new Cabinet. It was disturbing for the delegates to the conference to realise that none of the communists in parliament who are members of the Central Committee were selected to serve in the new Cabinet even though it is viewed as a “transitional Cabinet”. What message or lesson should we learn from these developments? Does it reflect the continuation of the marginalisation of Party cadres into the post-Polokwane period?

What does this mean in the context of a reconfigured alliance in theory and practice? The SACP in the Free State continues to argue that the composition of the Deployment Committee must have equal representation of the Alliance partners as decided at the policy conference. We should be alive to the fact that after the elections things might not change as we in the SACP would want them to. This is not a pessimistic and cynical view of the leadership of the Party. It is a call for the SACP to continue to be alert to this and continually ensure ongoing open debate and analysis.

The Party must also remain alive to the challenges that confront the people and maintain ideological resilience and a steeled political nerve to raise difficult issues which are in the interests of the working class. This is the class that we as the revolutionary vanguard Party claim to represent, and the deep aspirations of the working class must be constantly articulated if we are to fulfil our historical and revolutionary duty. We must constantly articulate a radical left perspective in all spheres and sectors of society and heighten mobilisation of our people.

We must marshal our cadres to build People’s Power through street committees, and oil the Alliance machinery for the coming elections. This is the only guaranteed way to build working class hegemony and power with the SACP providing strategic leadership and direction to the working class at the vanguard of these struggles. We must never allow this Party to be servile and inhibit its duty as an ideological compass. ●

CENTRAL COMMITTEE STATEMENT

Defend and advance our democratic and social gains

*The SACP Central Committee issued this statement
after its February meeting*

The main focus of the Central Committee was to receive reports on and to consolidate our election campaign for an overwhelming ANC-led alliance victory on 22 April.

From our door-to-door work, from our factory floor and community meetings and from the mass rallies in which we have engaged, one thing is increasingly clear: the ANC-led movement's mass base is responding in numbers often larger than ever before. Millions of ordinary South Africans are responding to defend the unity of the movement that brought them freedom. They are responding to the ANC-Alliance election message to defend and advance their democratic and social gains.

Above all, the great majority of South Africans have a clear appreciation that there is only one electoral formation that has the capacity, the policies and the popular support to galvanise our country and our government to respond effectively in the face of the most serious global economic crisis since the early 1930s.

It is a crisis that has its roots and its epicentre in the developed capitalist economies of the north, but it will not leave any country untouched. Already in China, more than 2-million migrant worker jobs have been lost. In India, job losses amounting to 100-million are being predicted in the export sector this year.

South Africa too is beginning to feel the blast of this grave global meltdown. Already 36 500 jobs have been lost in our car

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and mining sectors, sectors that are particularly vulnerable to plunging demand in our export markets.

In the midst of this global crisis, opposition parties and much of the media are trying to turn our local election campaign into a trite affair of personalities and traded insults. But the vast majority of South Africans, even those who are not ANC supporters, know in their hearts that if we are to weather the storm we need an experienced leadership in government, and we need a ruling party capable of uniting our country in the defence of jobs and in the defence of our social security net.

The SACP commends the role played by our government, and not least by SACP members in government, in bringing together the trade union movement, community representatives and the private sector to agree upon the Framework for South Africa's Response to the International Economic Crisis. Together, we must now ensure that the major pillars of this framework are translated into concrete interventions and are vigorously implemented.

At the heart of this framework response is the determination to continue to pursue our state-led public infrastructure programme, to expand public sector employment, and to consolidate our social security net. South Africa's stimulus package is fundamentally different to the rescue packages that dominate interventions in the developed capitalist centres.

There, governments are stepping in as lenders of last resort in a desperate (and probably vain) attempt to stave off further destruction of value in their economies.

In SA, our government is focused on the productive economy and on social services. Here the public sector is the employer and producer not just of last resort in the midst of this capitalist crisis, but, hopefully, also increasingly an employer and producer of first resort.

The infrastructure programme produced growth of over 10% in the construction sector, and therefore mitigated the overall 1,8% negative growth for the last quarter of 2008. Our ability to steer an effective infrastructure programme has a great deal to do with the fact that we succeeded in the early 2000s to block attempts to privatise and fragment our key state-owned enterprises. In this regard we continue to be deeply concerned by what has been happening in our telecommunications sector.

The Telkom sale of its Vodacom shares to the British company Vodafone is a case of greedy BEE elements (and others) compromising our national resources and capacities. We call on government to urgently review, and preferably reverse, this deal, not least in the current global context.

All social partners at Nedlac have agreed that we must not allow the working class and poor to bear the brunt of the crisis. There are many defensive measures that must be undertaken. Among them is a much greater policing of our trade movements. It is a scandal that there is a 60% difference between what China is recording as the value of its exports to SA, and the figure that our SARS has for the same trade. Clearly, there is gross under-invoicing by SA importers, and this must surely implicate some of our major clothing retailers. We call on government to get tough on this criminal behaviour.

A key pillar of the ANC-led Alliance election manifesto is the fight against corruption. The most serious forms of corruption are occurring in the public and private corporate sectors. We call on workers to be the ears and eyes of our campaign against corruption. In this regard, we salute the whistle-blowing initiatives of Satawu in regard to SAA.

The CC noted the good performance of SACP cadres on the ANC election list process. This is testimony to the trust that ANC branch members have in the hard work and commitment of many

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Party members. The CC discussed measures to reinforce our support for and the accountability of the many hundreds of deployed, and soon to be deployed, SACP cadres.

The CC received reports on joint work by the SACP and the ANC in the so-called "hot-spots" of Merafong, Moutse and Matatiele. We warmly welcome Parliament's decision to relocate the people of Merafong to Gauteng, thus acknowl-

edging that an injustice had been done that flew in the face of popular consultation. We also believe that good progress is being made in Moutse and Matatiele, although final outcomes will be unlikely before 22 April. We call on these communities to exercise restraint and to contribute actively to the effective resolution of outstanding issues. A key component towards effectively addressing their concerns is by voting for the ANC in even bigger numbers.

The CC salutes the government and people of Cuba on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of their revolution, celebrated at the beginning of this year. Despite many hardships, brought on by the persisting US blockade and other destabilisation measures, the Cuban revolution continues to inspire progressive forces around the world. We note that, despite some milder rhetoric, and some marginal reforms, President Barak Obama continues to be committed to maintaining the blockade, and now finds himself increasingly isolated on this matter throughout most of Latin America and the Caribbean. We call on President Obama to drop this failed and anachronistic Cold War policy, and we call on him to release the Cuban Five – the five imprisoned Cubans who were monitoring Miami-based terror cells.

The CC notes the transitional unity government formed in Zimbabwe. The viability of this arrangement remains uncertain. It does, however, offer some hope of a partial respite for the millions of Zimbabweans who are having to endure an all-round crisis. The respite must be used to ensure that the productive economy, especially small-farming, is returned to viability, and that democratic space is opened up for the beginnings of normalisation.

The CC condemns the continued persecution of democratic forces in Swaziland. Pudemmo chairperson, Cde Mario Masuku, remains incarcerated, in the past days Swayoco leaders have been detained without trial. We have concerns that torture is being used against political detainees. We welcome signs that the European Union is finally beginning to express concern about political oppression in Swaziland. As the pressure begins to mount we can expect this feudal regime to behave with increasing violence and criminality.

Forward to an overwhelming ANC-led election victory on 22 April! Together, we can do more!

2009 PROGRAMME OF ACTION

Forward to an overwhelming ANC victory

This is an edited version of the SACP's 2009 Programme of Action

Our 2009 Programme of Action (PoA) aims to take forward our 2007 Party Programme, The South African Road to Socialism, and our Medium Term Vision (MTV). Our MTV is directed at building working class hegemony in all key sites of power: the state, the economy, workplace, community, and in the ideological and international spheres.

Our 2009 PoA also locates itself within the contemporary domestic and global challenges. The immediate political conjuncture, likely to be dominant for some years, is that of the ANC's commitment to a progressive Election Manifesto, which was also informed by agreements reached at our two Alliance Summits in 2008, and the current global capitalist meltdown.

Some of the ANC's commitments in its Manifesto could be undermined by the current global capitalist crisis, and therefore a degree of flexibility will be required to ensure that we minimise the negative impact. But at the same time the current global capitalist crisis provides potential to drive a radical developmental agenda, especially a progressive industrial policy, state-led investment initiatives in both our infrastructure and in the productive economy – elements that are already contained in the ANC Manifesto.

The current capitalist crisis also enjoins us to increase our focus on the transformation of the financial sector. Our immediate aim should be to tackle the blockages in the further transformation and implementation of the Financial Sector Charter.

Improved relations and coherence at Alliance level, especially in relation to policy perspectives and immediate challenges, place additional responsibilities on the role of the SACP in the current period. The post-electoral period is also likely to raise new challenges for the SACP, requiring a much more focused attention on strengthening the SACP as a vanguard party of the

working class in the national democratic revolution.

Given the above realities and challenges, our 2009 PoA must assist the SACP to carry out key cross-cutting challenges in 2009 and beyond:

The SACP must **intensify mass work amongst the workers and the poor** of our country, and continue to build on the many campaigns and achievements on this score, especially since 2000. The election campaign will greatly assist us in intensifying mass work and it is also for this reason that we must not completely demobilise our structures after the elections, but redirect these energies towards mass mobilisation during 2009. An additional task for the SACP is that of contributing towards strengthening the ANC as a mass movement with a working class bias. Priority in this regard is also to ensure that the ANC does not completely demobilise after the elections, as has been the case before, but to use the election campaign as a platform to strengthen the role and capacity of the ANC to lead mass struggles and campaigns on the ground. Therefore it is important to approach elections work not solely for purposes of winning the elections – important as this is – but to build the mobilisational capacity of our movement as a whole beyond the elections.

For the SACP to strengthen its vanguard role in our revolution, we perhaps need to **pay more attention to matters of governance** than we have done before by building our institutional capacity for policy development and evaluation. Since 1994 we have been distracted from the centrality of this task mainly because of the huge offensive by the 1996 class project to marginalise us from governance matters, often forcing us into a defensive mode on engagement with governance and policy issues. With the changed climate within the Alliance, there is now an opportunity to be more systematic about this. But even more im-

portant is the fact that the spaces that have opened since Polokwane will not, in themselves, mature into a more radical NDR. This therefore requires that we develop our own internal policy capacity in a manner that will advance our goal of building working class hegemony in key sites of power. Strengthening this capacity must of necessity include building some full-time capacity to co-ordinate and drive this work. The most immediate platform for strengthening our policy work must be to track the implementation of the Manifesto and giving policy content to our campaigns.

Like never before since 1994, we need to **intensify ideological work, especially in two areas: political education and media**. Once more we need to fully integrate political education and media work in all our activities and programme. Our media work must still be two-pronged; strengthening our internal media (AC, Umsebenzi, online publications, etc) and external media work (engaging the public broadcaster, commercial print and electronic media, and ensure that ideas in our own publications are able to reach the broader working class and beyond). On political education, we need to aim to induct all our members on the SACP Constitution, 'South African Road to Socialism' and on the politics and objectives of our campaigns. On the media side, we need to build upon our first ever national media workshop to train our own communist journalists and writers, and seek to create appropriate networks with communist and other leftwing groups on the media front. Part of our ideological work must be anchored around intensified work within the working class, but also to extend this to identify our attitude and approach towards especially the growing black middle classes, and even how to engage the emerging black sections of the bourgeoisie around a progressive develop-

mental agenda. In other words building the SACP as a vanguard Party also means reaching out beyond our natural constituency into other class forces in society, with a view to making our impact felt even in those.

We need to convene our Special Congress before the end of 2009, as part of undertaking a comprehensive analysis and taking stock of the post-Polokwane and post-electoral realities and the challenges these pose for the SACP. The Special Congress must also be another platform for identifying some of the key immediate challenges in strengthening the vanguard character of the SACP in the new conditions. Just as we did during our 2005 Special Congress, the 2009 Special Congress must focus on the nature of class struggles taking place in broader society, but understand these within the context of their impact on our own broader movement, and the challenges all these pose.

It is also going to be important to aim to **strengthen our capacity to systematically undertake international work**, including strengthening full-time capacity at head office around this work. An immediate challenge is that of taking forward our work on building the African Left network, and relate this work to our broader internationalist engagements

It is around the above programmatic perspectives and challenges that we should anchor our 2009 PoA.

PILLARS OF THE 2009 PROGRAMME

The 2009 general elections

Our electoral work aims at mobilisation of all our structures to work for an overwhelming ANC victory. This must include intensified work among organised workers, community red forums and sectoral work, building on all the networks we have built during our campaigns. The framework of our campaign will be the six priority areas we have identified in our elections message, which include the five priority areas in the ANC's Election Manifesto. In addition to what is in the ANC Manifesto, the SACP shall emphasise those areas that relate to our campaigns. The focus of the election programme should entail and not be limited to:

- Effectively participate in the ANC election structures
- Convene Red Forums everywhere the SACP branch exists and wherever possible to convene such forums.
- Focus our work on the workers working jointly with Cosatu for workplace red

forums

- Do door-to-door work to explain the Manifesto and deal with any challenge faced by the liberation movement.

- Develop sectoral work strategies with a dedicated focus on our campaign networks

- Use the election campaign to take forward the task of building voting district based branches

- Establish the Party Building Commissions as the leading SACP election structures, as well as establish the Deployment and Accountability committees at national and provincial levels and interface with lower level structures.

Build street committees to fight crime, corruption and for popular mass mobilisation

- Building street, village/block committees as part of strengthening the crime fighting capacity of our people and the criminal justice system

- Strengthening the community policing forums

- Popular mobilisation for the defence of the revolutionary gains through active building of street committees and to advance the socialist content of the National Democratic Revolution

- Use communists' presence in the street committees to advance the building of voting district based branches.

- Locate the Know Your Neighbourhood Campaign and use access to the streets to deepen participatory democracy

2010 for all – working class participation and benefits

- Engage FIFA 2010 organising committee, the ANC, Cosatu, SMEs, co-operatives, informal traders, etc, to ensure it is not only the elites that benefit from the 2010 World Cup, but also the workers and the poor. Additional focus must be placed on host cities and aim to build '2010 for All Committees' in these localities

- Enhance the SACP members' role in promotion of the 2010 soccer world cup from the perspective and slogan '2010 For All'

Building people's power at local governance both in urban and rural areas

- Taking forward the SACP 2008 Red October campaign with respect to the municipal structures and systems acts that give local communities a major say in the affairs of the local government

- Ensuring that the local state budget-

ary process are properly discussed in community forums before the consultants decides which areas needs priority on developments

- The process of IDPs should be democratised, including increased focus on the development and implementation of IDPs for rural development

- Revive the campaign to build people's land committees and sustainable social security of the farm dwellers and rural people

- Deepen our Know and Act in Your Neighbourhood Campaign and deepen the leadership role of the SACP in local communities to defend our democracy and improve service delivery.

International

This pillar will focus on the current global financial crisis and its impact on the economies of the South countries

- Build and strengthen solidarity work with the people of

- **Cuba** – against the blockade and for the freedom of the Five,

- **Swaziland** for democracy and freedom and expose the autocratic tinkundla royal regime

- **Zimbabwe** – for democratisation and economic recovery

- **Western Sahara** against Moroccan occupation and for self determination and

- **Express solidarity** with other distressed communities and parts of the world such as Palestine, the DRC and Sudan.

- Strengthen the SACP political role within the international communist and workers' Party movement.

Organisational tasks and implications

- Setting up of Deployment and Accountability Committees and finalise urgent deployment matters both before and after the elections

- Develop SACP code of conduct and protocol for deployed cadres

- Focus on raising resources for senior full-time capacity at head office for Policy, Political Education, Media and Organising – preferably headed by full-time members of the Central Committee

- Resources for at least one full-time PEC member in every province

- Develop an induction manual for political induction of all our members

- Development of a political education programme and curriculum

- Recognise and ensure effective participation in all our important anniversary celebrations

SACP MEDIA WORKSHOP

Strengthening our ideas through Communist media

Our media goes back virtually to the founding of our Party – we have a responsibility to continue that proud tradition

These are edited extracts from Cde Blade Nzimande's (SACP General Secretary) opening address to the SACP election media workshop in February

We could not have held such a workshop at a more appropriate time – in October this year we will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the African Communist. In celebrating this achievement we should also use it as a platform to lay a further foundation for another 50 years of communist media activism, theoretical analysis and communist ideas in South African society!

The aims of this media workshop are the following:

- To strengthen and streamline our media work in relation to the elections, so that our messages are coordinated and effectively communicated, both inside our structures and in broader society. This is part of strengthening our general elections campaign in support of an ANC overwhelming electoral victory. Through the elections campaign we also want to ensure that the working class voice is clearly heard during the campaign, together with its perspectives on key political and policy issues
- To understand the role of media during the elections and beyond. By media, we do not only mean bourgeois media or some other media external to our organization, but also our own media.
- To understand the challenges relating to the role of the public broadcaster, the SABC, and how to meaningfully engage with this important institution
- To understand the bourgeois media and how to engage with it
- To learn to engage with the community media
- To provide an overview of the media



frameworks

It is important that we remind ourselves that the history of the SACP and media in South Africa goes a very long way. We must bear in mind our very proud record that as the SACP we can rightly claim that we are the pioneers of progressive media in the national liberation movement and in our country. Our own progressive media goes back almost to the founding of our Party.

We must be acutely aware that given this very long history, we are duty-bound to realize the enormous responsibility on our shoulders to ensure that we strengthen communist ideas through communist media in our country, and also ensure that we engage other media to ensure the cause of the workers and the poor in our country is advanced.

We launched Umsebenzi in the 1930s, and in the 1950s, Fighting Talk (under the editorship of Ruth First), Liberation (edited by Dan Tloome) and New Age In 1959 we launched The African Commu-

nist

Inkululeko was founded in 1940 under the editorship of Michael Diphuko and subsequently Edwin Mofutsanyana as a Party newspaper with articles in Sotho, Zulu, Tswana, Xhosa, Venda and the Shangaan language. A radical Afrikaans monthly Die Ware Republikein was also started under the Party's influence. Communists also established or played an important role in formation of other progressive newspapers and journals in the 1950s, which were banned one after the other, including the Guardian, Advance, New Age and Spark

The Worker was renamed Umsebenzi on 18 April 1930. Excerpts from first editorial of Umsebenzi include:

"The present number of the South African Worker (now having a bilingual title) is the first to be printed in Cape Town. A serious attempt is being made to publish weekly once more. The importance of a weekly paper to the Communist Party is obvious to all. It must be emphasised, however, that immediate and continued financial support is essential if we are to continue to publish weekly.

"The day has gone when the CP could depend on large donations from Europeans. Today our membership is largely composed of poverty-stricken Non-European workers and peasants...

"We therefore appeal to all Native and Coloured supporters of the Party to boost 'Umsebenzi' for all they are worth and to contribute as liberally as they can afford to our printing fund... We are confident that 'Umsebenzi' can be made to pay its way on the basis of mass circulation among Africans.

"Every member of our party must help to sell the paper. Thus we shall build up a fighting organ for the downtrodden slaves of this country". ●

SACP MEDIA WORKSHOP

Contesting on all fronts

Strengthening Party media, contesting in capitalist media and turning the SABC into a public broadcaster

By Judy Mulqueeny, KZN PEC member

SACP General Secretary Blade Nzimande opened the SACP Elections Media workshop by saying that in the current elections climate there was a need to intensify the struggle to diversify the media. There is little leftwing analysis. Instead, a process of tabloidisation and intense class battles in the public broadcaster were taking place.

The SACP itself was faced with some key challenges. We need to change the way we handle our own and the general media. The Party should help produce and reproduce left wing journalists. Media collectives had not been built.

A technical expert made a presentation on the political economy of the media, recalling the recent "scandal" about the personal life of President Kgalema Motlanthe involving a young woman. The story was first published by the Sunday Independent. It turned out that the woman had lied. When asked by journalists why she said what she had said, she answered: "I told you what you wanted to hear".

The expert noted that this raised two burning issues. The first was why the media wanted to hear this. The second concerned the systems and operations that encouraged it in its views. He said that we need to understand the role of the media better, as well as its ideological base and its role in capitalism. Increasingly, newspapers were being perceived as commodities. Further, the antagonism

of the media towards progressives had increased greatly since Polokwane.

What must be done? The expert suggested that competitive progressive media should be created, our own media platforms built and programmes for more representative newsrooms instituted. We should make it more difficult to demonise the SACP and our movement. He added: "We must plan, prepare and engage, engage, engage".

In the discussion which followed, the point was made that the ideological struggle was one of the pillars of the medium term vision of the SACP. We must advance the struggle for working class hegemony in the media. Also, the small leftwing press of the past had played a significant role in mass struggles and in the raising of political consciousness.

Another expert spoke of the SABC's vision as a public broadcaster of Broadcasting for Total Citizen Empowerment. But the funding model being used militated against its fulfilling its public service mandate. More and more it was being shaped by corporate interests. Commercialisation was the order of the day.

The SABC was in a state of crisis. Something had to be done to rescue it. Radio commanded the vast majority of audience. In this sector the SABC was a dominant player. But it had not used the medium in the best way. The SACP should see how to use the popular radio stations better. Other suggestions made were for corrective good governance, with public service emphasised rather than

commercial values.

Workshop sessions on the basics of handling the media and the basics of a media strategy followed. A third expert spoke of the need to amplify the SACP's voice during the elections. Following this, the SACP Media Officer Malesela Maleka, outlined 10 steps in developing a media strategy. In emphasising the need to plan engagement with the media, he stressed that "Whoever you are, you are not entitled or deserve to be listened to!"

In a session titled An Industry Perspective, a journalist argued that the SACP should contest for space in the media. She felt that the SACP should not be so oppositional. Its success in the battle for space, ideas and influence would depend ultimately on how strong it was on the ground. On the role of a Media Tribunal she worried that it would reverse press freedom. Those favouring the Tribunal said that it would be an independent mechanism for oversight over the media. It would be more effective than the media policing itself.

An overview of the Elections Manifesto was given by ANC spokesperson Jessie Duarte. She explained how campaign messages were being developed and phased. One of the assumptions was that the ANC image combined strong positives and negatives in a new way. The key challenge was to expand confidence in the capacity of the ANC to lead. Since we operate in a complex situation, we must communicate simply and be able to interpret this moment in history and the ANC performance.

A key issue was how best to mobilise the working class. Some Cosatu workers were weak ANC supporters, available to other parties, Cde Duarte noted.

The SACP's election message was a call on our constituency, the workers and the poor, to vote. The GS said we should highlight the SACP's history of struggle as well as the achievements of the ANC; focus on developments in particular localities; and be open about problems and talk about how they will be addressed.

A stirring call was made by SACP National Organiser Solly Mapaila to set up SACP Media War-rooms. Provinces and districts must set up structures to monitor and engage the media. There was also discussion about how to optimise the use of SACP media, and an overview of the media environment with its regulatory and policy framework was given. ●

We need to understand the role of the media better, as well as its ideological base and its role in capitalism. Increasingly, newspapers are being perceived as commodities

THE BOURGEOIS MEDIA

Lies, lies, more lies – and still no apology

Cde Motlanthe, the Independent Group and the shameful race to the bottom

This article was submitted for publication to the Independent Group of Newspapers in the wake of a series of articles they ran about the Deputy President of the ANC, falsely accusing the General Secretary of the SACP of leading a conspiracy against him. They flatly refused to run the article! So much for freedom of expression!

One day the truth of which they are fully aware will come out. They are perfectly aware of the origins of the falsehood they peddled. They spread malicious rumours against the General Secretary. We are waiting for them to do the honourable thing and apologise.

The ongoing treatment of the private life of the President of the Republic, Cde Kgalema Motlanthe, will perhaps go down in South African media history as the beginnings of its 'tabloidisation' and, much more seriously, the erosion of whatever credibility it still had. This dirty – and inaccurate – delving into the private life of the President, and the use of a clearly discredited, if not emotionally unstable, source constitutes reckless journalism. It is a race to the shameful bottom! This is a very serious abuse of press freedom, something that should ordinarily be of concern to and offend the common sensibilities of all decent South Africans.

However, since there seems to be no outrage at this, there seems to be a new media practice gaining ground in South Africa. This new media practice, perfected through the public persecution and maligning of the President of the ANC, Cde Jacob Zuma, is that it is an acceptable habit to dig into whatever 'dirt' and to fabricate smears against leaders of the ANC and the Alliance. In essence, free-

dom of the press now means freedom to attack ANC leaders, almost without any limits. No similar digging is directed at all those leaders in the Opposition – not that digging into people's private lives is something that should be done to anyone.

Media 'sources' have now become anyone willing to make any allegation against ANC leaders. Without bothering to double check the credibility of these sources and their political or personal agendas, journalists are happy to use them as long as that would cast doubt on the integrity of ANC leadership. How else does one explain using a young woman as a source who denies all she said before? To add insult to injury, the media gets her surname wrong! I suppose, just like under apartheid, 'black surnames are not real surnames, as they are not in the dominant languages of South African print media'!

In the midst of all this, media oversight bodies are suspiciously silent about this very serious abuse of media freedom. This is not surprising as some of us have consistently been saying that these oversight bodies are toothless as they are themselves part of the very same media they are supposed to judge impartially,

I suppose, just like under apartheid, 'black surnames are not real surnames, as they are not in the dominant languages of South African print media'!

including the inadequacy of penalties meted out to media outlets found to have lied or violated the rights of those unfairly covered.

Why is it that the Press Ombuds or SANEF, for instance, have not proactively taken up this issue, and condemned the editor and journalist involved for this flagrantly irresponsible journalism? Part of the problem, it would seem, is that unless a complaint is lodged, these institutions take no proactive steps. Where are the Anton Harbers, Franz Krugers and Guy Bergers? At the very least we would have expected an initiation of a public debate about the role of media in this whole fiasco.

While most of media has been complicit in this, the Independent Group of newspapers should be particularly ashamed about this whole episode. When the political editorial team of the Independent Group publicly pronounced that it will cover the elections fairly, we poured cold water on this – and we are being proved right!

The SACP has, for instance, lodged a formal complaint with the Press Ombuds about some of news coverage by the Independent Group. In fact, the editors in this group should undertake a very thorough soul-searching exercise about the nature, standard and quality of their journalism and editorial policies. The editors are also possibly aware about how and why my alleged attempts to besmirch the name of the President were fabricated.

Such a soul-searching exercise must include an honest assessment of the extent to which some of the journalists in this group are, wittingly or unwittingly, being used to pursue agendas aimed at sowing division and confusion within the ranks of our movement. In addition a question

needs to be asked as to whether the South African media has actually not become hostage to 'information peddlers' disguised as sources, exploiting its gullibility to tarnish our leadership at any cost?

A discussion is urgently needed on balancing individual rights as contained in the Bill of Rights and freedom of the press. Clearly, the press ombuds is an inadequate mechanism to deal with this. Reflection is also required on the constitutionality of the procedures used by the Press Ombuds that require a complainant to surrender his/her rights to take the matter further through the courts.

In any other democracy, an editor who had published such a false and offensive article aimed at damaging the reputation of their Head of State would have resigned in shame, and the journalist who produced such claptrap fired. The media industry would have been outraged and condemned such behaviour. But not in South Africa! The editors and media watchdogs who parade as paragons of morality, glibly denouncing the conduct of political leaders, suddenly lose their



voices when one of their own stands accused of shameful behaviour. Incidentally, who should guard the guardians?

Instead this week, the South African National Editors' Forum issued a bizarre warning that journalists could become targets of violence and intimidation during the election period. This appears to be a convenient decoy to divert from loss of credibility, compromised ethics, political agendas and decline of standards of journalism in the South African media.

The ANC's Polokwane conference resolved to explore the setting up of a media tribunal. To the media, this proposal has become a red rag before a bull, including distortions that this means censoring the media. One feels that this proposal must be revisited, specifically to address, through a simple and affordable process, more punitive measures where media has been found to have violated individual rights.

The media industry should stop "crying wolf" about imagined threats from the ANC government. There is no such thing. Instead it is time to face up to the fact that something has gone horribly wrong with the South African media. ●

SACP MEDIA WORKSHOP

Taking media seriously

EIGHTY-FOUR delegates participated in a lively, highly successful SACP elections media workshop from 13 to 15 February in Johannesburg.

The aims of the workshop basically were to:

- Increase understanding of the importance of the media.
- Advance the SACP's election campaign through effective use of both the external and our internal media.
- Equip comrades with some basic skills in communication.
- Link short-term election goals with the long term media and organisational needs of the SACP.

The Workshop was opened by the

SACP General Secretary, Cde Blade Nzimande, who dealt with the history of SACP media. A range of technical experts, who accompanied their inputs with very good quality written material, participated. Among the topics discussed were:

- The history and role of media in the SACP.
- The political economy of South African media
- The media regulatory framework
- The role of the public broadcaster
- Maximising coverage from the SABC
- Perspectives from the News Industry
- Alternative Media Platforms
- Basic Communication Skills
- Conveying the SACP's election messages

- Optimising SACP's internal media

The workshop decided that the SACP will set up warrooms from national to district level to engage effectively with the media and ensure that SACP elections messages are communicated. It was also decided that delegates at the workshop should play an active role in strengthening the internal media of the SACP, including Umsebenzi and African Communist.

The SACP will also explore the possibilities of having further media workshops and training sessions beyond the elections to develop a core of comrades who will focus on the media. Priority will be given for further training to those who attended the workshop. ●

Working tirelessly for an ANC victory

We, the delegates of the third plenary session of the SACP in the Free State, drawn from the districts and branches of the SACP in the Free State gathered for the 3rd Provincial Council in Parys in the Josie Mpama District.

Fully conscious of the political tasks and objectives of the Council to assess the implementation of our Party Programmes and having assessed the global economic situation we noted:

- The imminent demise of capitalism;
- The disastrous consequences of the economic meltdown, particularly for the working class and the poor.
- The state of the public health system in the province which justifies the correctness of our campaign on health
- The colossal crisis in the municipalities

Having assessed the state of our organisation, we noted the following:

- The unpredictable state of our branches
- Our inability, particularly at branch level to seamlessly implement the Party programme.
- Having assessed the state of the Alliance we noted the sentimental nature of

FREE STATE PC

the Alliance at all layers of the organisation:

- The weak state of governance machinery in the province.
- The need to strengthen our election work in the midst of the emergence of the splinter groups and the re-configuration of opposition parties
- Our role in the 2009 elections is strategic as the vanguard party of the working class.
- The struggles of people in rural areas are struggles of the working class
- The health challenges are challenges to basic human rights

The Council believes that:

- Ours is an Alliance built on the blood and sweat of many cadres, including cdes Chris Hani, Joe Slovo, Moses Kotane, Moses Mabhida. Long live the undying spirit of our fallen cadres, Long Live!
- Our vanguard role remains critical in the current epoch.
- Tireless work needs to be undertaken in ensuring an overwhelming victory of the ANC in the 2009 elections
- The opposition parties pose little or no

challenges to the ANC hegemony over the working class.

- Access to health care is a basic human rights and class issue and should be given recognition.

The ANC manifesto for the 2009 that commit the ANC to promote:

- Access to quality health care.
- Decent jobs
- Free compulsory and quality education
- Access to land and rural development
- Fighting crime and corruption.

Fully conscious of the challenges and battles ahead, we declare our commitment:

- To strengthen the organisation at all levels for the full implementation of the programme of action
- To strengthen the Alliance for the implementation of the Polokwane and Alliance Summit resolutions
- To work effortlessly to allay the struggle of rural people and the health crisis in the province
- To work tirelessly to ensure an overwhelming ANC victory in the elections
- To dedicate all our energy, resources, and time for the implementation of the Council resolutions and declaration ●

Organising for a massive ANC election victory

On 21 February the KZN SACP held a Provincial Council and issued this declaration: We, the 200 delegates at this major Provincial Council, commit ourselves to ensuring a massive ANC elections victory in this province and the country as a whole.

We will implement our elections programme to the full. Key aspects of this programme include:

- Active participation in the rallies convened by the ANC.
- Organising workers general meetings.
- Linking our Red October and other campaigns, such as land and agrarian reform; the financial sector; and establishment of street committees to tackle crime to the election campaign.
- Participating in door-to-door campaigns.
- Distributing SACP and ANC election pamphlets
- Organising SACP election meetings within voting districts as a basis of restructuring SACP branches to coincide with the boundaries of voting districts.

KZN PC

- Participating in sectoral meetings to address the concerns of specific constituencies

We believe public representatives who are SACP members should account directly to SACP structures, and we support the formation of a PWC Deployment and Accountability Committee that will provide a framework for ensuring this accountability.

Districts are urged to finalise district programmes of action on the elections as soon as possible. Provincial and district war-rooms should be established as soon as possible to engage the public media and ensure that the SACP elections messages are effectively communicated.

We have begun to better understand the global capitalist economic crisis and its possible impact on our country. We need to discuss this matter more comprehensively in the coming months, and together with the SACP nationally and our Alliance partners, develop a strategy and programme to effectively respond to this.

We note the major challenges being confronted by Ithala Bank, and believe that serious consideration should be given to disbanding the Ithala Board and appointing a more representative and competent Board, and mandate the Provincial Executive Committee to engage with the ANC and the provincial government on this.

We reject the removals at Inanda Dam and mandate the PEC to take this further with the ANC and the provincial government.

We call for the dissolution of labour bureaux and a halt to the casualisation of the workforce, and urge the ANC to implement aspects of the ANC Elections Manifesto dealing with these issues as soon as possible. We are utterly confident of a massive ANC elections victory and we unconditionally commit ourselves to sparing no effort in making our contribution as the SACP to this necessary victory!

Communist cadres to the front!

Forward to a massive ANC elections victory! ●

DEBATE

Leading from the back – it's the revolutionary way

'Shepherd leadership' is true leadership, guiding and empowering the followers

By Bongani Makhubu



Bongani Makhubu

The concept of leadership is complex. To fully understand the term "leadership", it is necessary to see it as giving guidance to a significant number of individuals who vest trust and confidence in somebody who takes the lead. More often than

not, it becomes common that a person who leads is positioned in front and the followers are at the back. This may be because a leader in front must have a better vision and understanding and be able to unify the masses behind him. But sometimes the followers may expect too much of a leader to guide them.

But what really is leadership?

This historical pattern of leadership with leaders in the front and followers behind almost destroyed the ANC. There are two problems with this concept of leadership. Firstly, it suggests that leaders have a monopoly of wisdom (technocratic commandism). Secondly, it suggests that followers will follow a leader even if they are led astray. To some extent, what happened in Polokwane indicates that leadership is much more complex – and that followers will not simply blindly follow a leader, like the previous ANC President. It is because they refuse to accept this that former leaders of the ANC have now formed Cope.

As materialists we have been taught to understand the environment, the material conditions – and it is these material conditions that shape consciousness. Relying too much on leaders is not correct. Leaders must learn also to lead from the back – the 'shepherd' style of leadership. Leading from the back will provide closer

links between the leader and the led. It also helps to give followers a chance to develop confidence in themselves. A good leader is one who develops the leadership qualities in others.

Shepherd leadership encourages collectivism and greater convergence between followers. Leaders must not only guide followers but reflect their aspirations. Leaders must inspire followers to become collectively engaged in action to achieve their common goals.

The Freedom Charter says "the people shall govern", not "the leaders shall govern". The Charter is clear that the power rests with the people – and it is the people who make history. Leaders must be

democratically elected, and they must, after time, make way for their followers to become leaders. Democracy must be the primary product and leaders the secondary product. In choosing leaders we must always ask: will these leaders step down some day or will they want to lead forever?

Advancing the NDR does not mean only developing the economy to benefit the poor. It also means developing the capacity of ordinary people to exercise democracy and leadership roles. It means developing the potential for democracy of the individual.

When Cde Jacob Zuma was elected as president of the ANC in Polokwane, he said: "I accept the mandate you have given us with the full understanding that you can withdraw it at any time, if you feel that we are not serving you in a manner that you want to be served. That is the essence of democracy. Leaders lead through the will and graciousness of the people". It is this approach that can be seen as shepherd leadership. In our democracy we must increasingly ensure that our leaders lead from the back – so that the masses can take their rightful place in history. ●

In choosing leaders we must always ask: will these leaders step down some day or will they want to lead forever



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COOPERATIVES

Youth cooperative makes waves

By Judy Mulqueeny, KZN PEC member

Emerging co-operatives face some stern challenges. But members of the Umzansi Marketing Co-operative are determined to sustain their co-operative. "Our co-operative is like a baby. We want to nurture it and make it grow," said Phumza Mpaka, treasurer.

Youth co-operatives have an illustrious history in helping to reconstruct their countries. Umzansi members are no different in their desire to make a difference. They come from a range of backgrounds – from the banking sector, fashion industry, and entertainment and promotions. Some had ventured into the perilous waters of small enterprise.

But, encouraged by KZN provincial government support, they decided to work collectively. They are not troubled by having to compete in the market. "Umzansi has an edge, a market secret," another member, Sakhiwo Mpaka, argues. They did their research, networked widely and developed a sound strategy.

Most small black businesses and co-operatives have lagged when it comes to marketing, Sakhiwo adds. He thinks they lack the necessary tools, budget and technology. Even the Further Education and Training Colleges, which have helped co-operatives in KZN develop business plans, sometimes overlooked the marketing aspect. This is where Umzansi identified a gap.

Based in central Durban, it started in 2006. So far, it has done a variety of promotional work. Most notable has been the work it did for the Ethekewini Community Church. A moving billboard was provided for the Abstinence Walk from Durban to Vryheid organized by the church. For eThekewini Municipality the co-operative developed a promotional package of supply chain material.

More recently Umzansi worked with the Department of Justice. It assisted with branding, creating banners for an event at the International Convention Centre in

Durban. A co-operative from Amamzimtoti has also been helped to market and rebrand its product.

The services sector's growing dominance in the global economy is perhaps a two-edged sword. Small enterprises have the opportunity to move into new local spaces which are opening up. Worker co-operatives in the sector, where members work in their own enterprises, have developed unevenly though.

The enterprise model based on worker control and democratic governance is a contested one. Global regulators are seeking to impose new standards on it. In this context, how to construct markets, and the role of the state, must be rethought.

Sakhiwo said that in Umzansi, "Some members were elected to take on the part of the boss. But they do not rule the co-operative like a one-man business. We all have an opinion, because it is our business". He conceded that it can be a challenge to own an enterprise with other young members. Co-operative principles, while necessary, are not easy to implement. Umzansi created its own rules to bind the members and to keep them committed. Some who could not identify with the co-operative vision, or who were not prepared to make the sacrifices, had dropped out. They wanted a quick fix, to earn profits right away.

There were other teething problems. It is a battle to find new work. Umzansi is not afraid to ask for help. "Don't be scared to say you do not know". The KZN Department of Economic Affairs and Finance has assisted it. Yet more can

The enterprise model based on worker control and democratic governance is a contested one

be done by government to support co-operatives.

Whether government was providing "enabling support or dependent development" has been questioned by the Co-operative and Policy Alternative Centre in Johannesburg. In a report it published in 2006, it noted that some government officials did not understand what co-operatives were all about. They perceived them to be either ordinary small businesses or poverty alleviation projects.

In KZN co-operatives have been able to access finance, part grant/part loan, through an innovative scheme piloted by the Ithala Development Bank. At the same time, they have experienced setbacks. A case in point was the business plan submitted by Umzansi to the bank. It was lost three times. "But we still persevered and re-submitted our plan. This has paid off but it was not easy."

The co-operative movement itself has not been without controversy. Not least was the financial and organizational crisis which beset the co-operative apex body, the National Co-operative Association of South Africa. Musi Phewa, the chair of Umzansi, serves as the acting secretary of the formation committee of the new National Co-operative Apex. It is engaged in forming apex forums in districts around the country. Musi also chairs the Ethekewini Secondary Co-operative. Its leadership is drawn from different sectors of co-operatives in Durban such as the youth, services, and agricultural sectors.

The struggle is on to build the co-operative movement not only from the top down, but from the bottom up also. Duplication of services by agencies such as the Small Enterprise Development Agency or the Umsombomvu Youth Fund needs to be overcome. Most pressing are the procurement challenges facing co-operatives and SMMEs.

Umzansi wants to be somewhere as time goes on and to be relevant, helping South Africa to transform and to build its economy. ●

INTERNATIONAL

Celebrating 50 years of revolution in Cuba

By Chris Matlhako, SACP Politburo Member

In early December 2008, a three-person SACP delegation went on an official visit to Cuba to meet with the Communist Party of Cuba (CPC) to consolidate the historical relationship between our two parties. The visit, on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution, was led by Cde Jeremy Cronin, the SACP's deputy general-secretary, and also comprised Cdes Phumulo Masualle, SACP national treasurer and politburo members Lindelwa Dunjwa and Chris Matlhako.

The delegation visited the grave of the late SACP and ANC leader, Comrade Alex la Guma.

A highlight of the visit was the placing of a commemorative plaque on the wall of the venue where the last SACP congress in exile was held in 1989 – the 7th SACP Congress held in the province of Matanza's 'El Valle' village.

It was the 50th anniversary of the triumph of the Cuban Revolution which preoccupied all exchanges. We were told that the 50th anniversary would not be celebrated with much fanfare, because of the heavy costs of flood damage from three hurricanes in the months preceding December. However, activities to mark the revolution were planned for the whole of 2009.

The victory of 1 January 1959 was, as Ricardo Alarcón de Quesada, President of the National Assembly of People's Power (Cuba's parliament) recalled: "A news event of epochal proportion even for those who knew little about that country. For many, it was like discovering a new world. And, as in the age of the great navigators, encountering it was clouded both by ignorance and the prejudices that usually accompany such revelations."

The first day of 2009 marked 50 years since Cuba was liberated from the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista through coordinated rural guerrilla warfare and urban revolt. The triumph of the Cuban



Unveiling of a plaque commemorating the SACP's 7th Congress, its last as an illegal party (from left): Deputy SACP General Secretary Jeremy Cronin, SACP PB member Lindelwa Dunjwa Jorge Risquet Valdes (former CC member of the Partido Communist Cuba and head of Cuban delegation negotiations post-Cuito Cuanavale battle), SACP PB member Chris Matlhako and the Cuba-Africa Friendship Organisation president Rodolfo Puente Ferro.

Revolution, led by Fidel Castro, was a long march of many centuries of struggle, precipitated by Spanish colonialism, slavery and the sugarcane plantations and US imperialist policy.

The January 1959 triumph of the Cuban Revolution, unleashed varied scholastic and other observations, all of whom were struck by the character and nature of the forces taking part, not the least the fascination with Ernesto "Che" Guevara, the young Argentine-born medical doctor turned guerilla.

Cuba's struggle to end slavery and achieve independence has its roots in the struggles, particularly, of Carlos Manuel Cespedes – one of the main revolutionary leaders in eastern Cuba in the 19th century. On 10 October 1868 Cespedes proclaimed the formation of a movement to fight for both Cuba's independence and the freeing of the slaves – whom he referred to as "citizens" and to whom he invited to join the struggle to achieve both these aims.

After liberating Bayamo, one of Cuba's principal cities, Cespedes installed a revolutionary government there – a triumvirate that included a Black and a manual

worker. This revolutionary government exercised authority over the Valle del Cauto for a short period, laying out a blueprint for revolutionary democracy, involving direct participation by the people in the government. These were the first experiences of 'people's power' in Cuba!

After 10 years of war, Cuba lost over a third of its population, with massive emigration to neighboring countries – by far the largest exodus in its history.

Then there was the period of Cuban national hero Jose Marti, whose image is found in official buildings on the island. Born in 1853, Marti was an adolescent when the 1868 "Ten Years War" started. At 16, he became a political prisoner. He lived for just 42 years, nearly all in exile, including 14 in the USA. Marti was Latin America's first politician to call US imperialism by that name, to warn of its threat to the peoples of Latin America and to call for continental resistance and unity to oppose it. Marti coined the phrase 'in the belly of the beast' – talking about his experiences in the US. Many in Cuba assert that it was Marti who introduced to Cuban culture the idea of a single party as an essential tool of revolution. Marti

rescued the founding ideology of the 1868 revolution. For him, independence was inseparable from radical social revolution.

US military interventions in Cuba were frequent from 1898. Cuba and Puerto Rico – still a US protractorate – were seen as prizes of the US and its imperialist interests after the defeat and withdrawal of the Spanish colonialists from the region. Cuba and Puerto Rico were the last countries in Latin America to wage war for national independence.

Then in 1902, following four years of US military occupation, the Republic of Cuba was proclaimed. The Cuban Republic was finally a reality but its constitution contained a provision that gave the US the right to intervene in Cuban affairs at any time it deemed necessary to safeguard US interests. Until 1 January 1959, Cuba had experienced the past century under the yoke of US interests.

The revolutionary victory led by Castro put an end to foreign domination and set in motion a process of social and economic transformation. Cuba finally as-

serted its sovereignty and its people began to recognise themselves as free and independent actors for the first time.

Since then, the Cuban people have had to face constant aggression, including the longest economic blockade in history, military attacks (such as the failed Bay of Pigs invasion), interminable acts of terrorism and sabotage, diplomatic pressure and propaganda campaigns.

On the eve of the triumph of the Revolution, Batista and his clique ran to Miami, with the explicit assistance of the US, but after plundering the national coffers of Cuba to ensure that there was to be no government when the rebels took control of the state.

US opposition to the Cuban Revolution began before 1 January 1959. From that day on it has only intensified – from the Torricelli Act (1992) and Helms-Burton Act (1996), to the unlimited imperialist arrogance of George W Bush and his detailed plans to intervene in Cuban affairs to the point of total domination. The US has, over the last half century, spent more

than its total “development assistance” to Latin America or its spending on education and medical services for its own poor citizens on campaigns to defeat Cuba.

Though recent mutterings seem to suggest the US is contemplating a different approach to its relations with Cuba, the basis for this does not yet exist. At present five Cuban patriots languish in jails in US prisons, on spurious charges of terrorism and espionage.

These five Cuban patriots’ only sin is to have infiltrated the Miami-based anti-Castro mafia, responsible for acts of terrorism against Cuba for many years, to get information on their activities and plans and to forward this information to US authorities.

The SACP delegation was very impressed with the advances made over the years, pledged its internationalist solidarity and vowed to fight for the release of five Cuban patriots, the normalisation of US-Cuba relations and ending of the embargo against Cuba. ●

ICWP

Towards the 11th International meeting of communist and workers’ parties

By Cde Chris Matlhako, SACP Politburo member

The Working Group of the 10th International Communist and Workers Parties took place on the sidelines of the 18th Congress of the Greek Communist Party, on the 17th February in Athens, Greece.

The meeting was attended by the members of the Working Group – the Partido Comunista do Brazil (PCdoB), Communist Party of Cuba (CPC), Communist Party of Spain (CPS), Communist Party of Portugal (CPC), Communist Party of Bohemia and Monrovia Czech Republic (CPBM), Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF), South African Communist Party (SACP), Communist Party of India [Marxist] (CPI-M), Lebanese CP and Greek Communist Party (KKE) and by representatives of Communist Party of Canada (CPC), Communist Party of Albania (CPA),

Workers Party of Belgium (WPB), Syrian Communist Party (SCP), Communist Party of Syria (CPS), Palestinian Peoples Party (PPP), Communist Party of Turkey (CPT).

The meeting decided on the topic, the date and the place for the 11th International Meeting of Communist and Workers’ Parties in 2009. The 11th International Meeting of Communist and Workers’ Parties will be held on November 2009, in Kerala, India and will be hosted jointly by the Communist Party of India [Marxist] (CPI-M) and the Communist Party of India (CPI).

The Working Group decided on the theme: “The international capitalist crisis, the workers’ and peoples’ struggle, the alternatives and the role of the communist and working class movement”

Furthermore, in the face of the very dangerous situation created by the murderous attacks and war crimes by Israel

against the Palestinian people the Working Group decided to convene an Extraordinary Meeting of Communist and Workers’ Parties in solidarity with the heroic struggle of the Palestinian people and the peoples of the Middle East in Damascus, Syria in September 2009.

During the session of the Working Group, representatives shared information on the popular actions taken in solidarity with struggles of the peoples of the region of Middle East after the Israeli attacks on Gaza. The parties saluted the heroic resistance to the aggressors and issued a solidarity statement.

The participants underlined their commitment to the struggles against the current capitalist crisis, and initiatives commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution and to the other initiatives decided at the 10th International Meeting in Sao Paulo, Brazil in November 2008. ●

GREEK CP CONGRESS

KKE's congress of counterattack

Chris Matlhako, SACP Politburo member

The Greek Communist Party (KKE) held its 18th Congress in Athens, 18-22 February 2009, under theme 'Strong KKE – 18th Congress of Counterattack'.

The Congress brought together party units (PBOs) from across Greece, allied structures such as its youth-wing Greek Communist Youth (KNE) and the Greek trade union federation, PAME. About 3 000 delegates were joined by 98 international delegations. KKE has for some years convened and hosted the early meetings' of the International Communist and Workers Parties.

Leading up to the 18th Congress, KKE Central Committee released two documents for wider discussion and debate. The pre-congress debates concerned the period since the 17th Congress and the Party's tasks until the 19th Congress; and assessments of socialist construction in the 20th century in USSR and KKE's conception of socialism

It is the 'thesis on socialism' that sparked huge debates. Emanating from the decisions of the 17th Congress, KKE set out the main duty for the CC concerning issues of an ideological and political nature. The approach of the KKE contrasted Soviet socialist democracy and bourgeois parliamentarism. The "dictatorship of the proletariat ... presented a superior form of democracy", and "bourgeois and opportunist propaganda", which identifies "democracy with bourgeois parliamentarism and freedom with bourgeois individualism and private capitalist ownership".

Social and economic conditions in Greece have been declining for the majority of the population (as they have been in most European countries). Coupled with inhibiting EU conditions on agriculture, the decline has included pushing much of the former rural population into the urban metros such as Athens as jobseekers and small-shop-



General secretary Aleka Papariga addresses the 18th Congress



keepers and contributed to raising anti-EU sentiments. Much of Europe has over the past few years been challenged, with farmers embarking on strikes; truck-drivers blocking roads; increasing neo-fascism and anti-communism; and increasing brutality of police dealing with anti-government protests.

Greece has been gripped by protests and unrest, which on many occasions turned violent. Latest opinion poll results show that nearly half of the voters believe that neither of the country's two major political parties is capable of governing.

In the week of the 18th Congress, doctors and other health care officials took industrial action for 48 hours to protest against the chronic staff and equipment shortages that have plagued the public health care system. Greek hospitals are

regularly demanding doctors work more than the European Union mandated limit of 48 hours a week. The strike action is just one of a series of protests which has seen the government pitched against students, farmers, cleaners and even police officers.

In the past few days, Thessaloniki saw riots in which about 1 000 demonstrators attacked the city's central police station and took part in running street battles for hours. There were 17 arson attacks on Friday by a revolutionary organisation calling itself the "Conspiracy of the Cores of Fire". Even more violent have been the armed attacks on police stations in Athens.

Political and economic woes have added to calls for national elections by many unhappy with the government's handling of a wide range of everyday issues such as employment, education and law enforcement. Currently, Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis has just a one seat majority in parliament and is facing divisions within his cabinet as ministers manoeuvre to position themselves for the possibility of national elections and a leadership battle.

The 18th Congress re-elected cde Aleka Papariga as its general-secretary. ●

MIDDLE EAST

Supporting the Palestinian masses

Left parties condemn Israeli aggression

The 68 Communist and workers' parties and liberation organisations listed below having convened on the eve of the 18th Congress of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) in Athens, wish to express their strong condemnation of the barbaric ground, naval and aerial aggression launched by Israel against Gaza which began in late December 2008.

This brutal assault on Gaza lasted some 22 days and resulted in the death of over 1,350 citizens, wounded thousands of innocent civilians including women, children and the elderly, and left a massive trail of destruction of homes, properties and infrastructure, depriving the residents of Gaza of the most basic services.

The parties also express their grave concern for the resulting humanitarian tragedy, and outrage at the intentional targeting of schools and civil institutions, including the UNRWA school in Jabalia Camp.

The Israeli attack on Gaza is in reality an aggression against the entire Palestinian people. Based on the above, the signatories wish to declare the following:

- We salute the heroic steadfastness of the Palestinian masses of Gaza, and stress the fundamental right of the Palestinian people to resist the occupation, a right recognised by the U.N. and international law. We demand the immediate lifting of the siege of Gaza, the re-opening of borders, and the rapid reconstruction of all that was damaged or destroyed by this wanton aggression;

- We reaffirm our support for and solidarity with the Palestinian people in their struggle to regain their legitimate and inalienable national rights, including the right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent and sovereign state with Al-Quds (East

Jerusalem) as its capital, as well as the right of return for all Palestinian refugees in accordance with U.N. Resolution 194;

- We strongly condemn the perpetuated construction of the racist wall as well as of the colonial settlements in the occupied West Bank which are in flagrant conflict with all the relevant UN decisions.

- We demand the immediate remove of the wall and of the settlements as well as the immediate release from custody of all the freedom prisoners in the Israeli de-



Palestinian youths rescue a wounded comrade during the Israeli invasion

tention.

- We call on the UN Security Council and other international organisations to conduct a comprehensive and thorough investigation of the grave human rights violations and war crimes committed by the Israeli army during this assault on Gaza, including its use of internationally prohibited weapons against the civilian population. The parties also call for the formation of special legal commissions to file "war crimes" charges against the Israeli authorities before the International

Court of Justice, the International Criminal Court and/or national juridical structures;

- We urge all sections of Palestinian national movement to work seriously and in a responsible manner toward ending the internal split and re-establishing Palestinian national unity. In this regard, the parties confirm the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) is the legitimate and the internationally recognised unified address of Palestinian people, and call for reactivating the role and status of the PLO with an open door to all those Palestinian national forces desiring to join it;

- We declare our intention to help build the international campaign to support Gaza and demand emergency assistance from the international community for its reconstruction.

Finally, the signatories commit to the following action measures on behalf of their organisations and members:

- to step up their solidarity actions with the Palestinian people internationally and within their respective countries;

- to pressure their respective governments to cancel the military and some political accords with the State of Israel;

- to organise and send, at the earliest opportunity, a joint party delegation to the occupied Palestinian territories to express our common solidarity with the national struggle of the Palestinian people;

- to convene an international symposium in solidarity with the Palestinian people, to be held in Damascus before the end of 2009;

- to organise a joint caravan of material aid to Gaza; and

- to hold an International Day of Action in Solidarity with the Palestinian people, with particular focus on the demand to break the siege of Gaza.

The signatories extend an invitation to other Communist and Workers' parties and organisations to endorse this statement, and urge the Working Group of the International Meetings of Communist and Worker's Parties (IMCWP) to work out the details of implementation of the above program of action, in consultation with the Palestinian and Arab member-parties. ●

This list of demands was signed by 68 communist and workers' parties

We will do everything in our power to ensure that Jacob Zuma is the next President of South Africa

From Page 24

- Enlisting 10 000 young communist volunteers to be part of the ANC election machinery to work on door to door, blitz, mobilisation and interaction with communities;

- Commemorating the life and times of Chris Hani in the month of April through a memorial lecture and Chris Hani Games throughout all our provinces;

- Visiting colleges, workplaces, schools, campuses and informal settlements to engage with youth in these areas;

- Engaging with young professionals and middle class youth on how we believe the ANC Election Manifesto addresses their needs and aspirations;

- Using electronic media such as Facebook, MixIT, Hi.5 and many other social networking sites to engage with young voters. All National Committee members have been encouraged to be involved into these.

The YCL will be going far and wide to campaign for the ANC, especially in areas where it is believed that the ANC is an underdog. Our major priority will be the Western Cape, where we believe that we need to engage with young people from all across race, culture, creed and religion on why they should vote for the ANC. We will therefore be deploying the best of our cadres to go to this province door by door, street by street, block by block and village by village to ensure that no young voter is left unattended.

The youth vote will determine the President of the Republic, and we will do everything in our power to ensure that that President is Jacob Zuma.

We are extremely worried with the attempt to Americanise our politics by some political parties, using the media in this regard. We believe that the media has offered itself on the altar of this Americanisation of our politics. This Americanisation includes elevating politicians to the status of celebrities, probing on their personal life as if this has anything to do with their capacity to lead. We believe that the South African society, especially the most downtrodden, is not interested in these gimmicks and see politicians as servants of the people, rather than show-

biz stars.

We are equally of the view that some political parties and politicians have not assisted the situation by going into politics because they regard it as fashionable and for self-gratification. How do we explain, irrespective of the platform of democracy, the fact that there are more than 150 political parties that will be contesting in these elections? We believe that politics should be taken as a means to serve the people, and not as a way of getting people salaries while making a mockery on our politics.

We seem to have left the real issues that affect real South Africans and are now preoccupied with who is going out with who and when is the next divorce going to happen in the political Hollywood of our country. We need to ensure that we deal with this rot that has become a symbol of our politics, and therefore focus on why ordinary young people are daily affected by unemployment, poverty and HIV-Aids. It remains the responsibility of the media to challenge politicians on why there are challenges of service delivery and rampant corruption instead of spying on their personal lives.

The National Lekgotla condemned in the strongest terms possible the threats of violence made by the IFP Youth Brigade, and their belief that certain territories belong to them. We believe that the South African Police Services, the South African Human Rights Commission and the Independent Electoral Commission should act against such behaviour as it is a reflection of barbarism and a dangerous flirtation with violence. This

The National Lekgotla condemned in the strongest terms possible the threats of violence made by the IFP Youth Brigade, and their belief that certain territories belong to them

is not only limited to KZN; the IFP has meted out violence to ANC members in parts of Gauteng. We believe that the IFP is panicking that they will not perform well and are therefore seeking to use violence as an alternative to mobilising and electioneering. Our view is that the leader of the IFP Youth Brigade should have been arrested and the IFP disqualified from contesting elections.

Humanitarian crises in Zimbabwe and Palestine and the dictatorship in Swaziland

The YCL is extremely worried about the extent of the humanitarian crises in Zimbabwe and some sections of South Africa, caused by the cholera outbreak. Young communists excited by the prospects of change in that country. We are also excited that South Africa is on the verge of agreeing with Zimbabwe on the needs of intervention in that country.

We will be mobilising a minimum of 100 volunteers, known as the Chris Hani Brigade, to go into Zimbabwe and assist in combating the humanitarian crises. These 100 volunteers will also be deployed in parts of South Africa where there are cholera outbreaks. We have already requested a meeting with the Department of Foreign Affairs, and are talking to various government departments and NGOs to assist with the logistics of deploying these volunteers. We call on the youth to volunteer.

We also believe that this will help deal with the xenophobia meted to Southern Africans who are refugees/workers in South Africa by deploying these young people.

We call on the release of Mario Masuku in Swaziland, who has been languishing in jail for months now in conditions that are unacceptable, based on his political beliefs and struggles.

We further support the application by Palestinian authorities to the International Criminal Court against Israel, and believe that the Israelis have committed the worst of atrocities against a people who are prepared to co-exist with them. We condemn the attempt by the various Jewish organs to equate criticism of Israeli violence with anti-Semitism. ●



**SOCIALISM
IN OUR
LIFETIME!**

Y-REDS

VOICE OF THE YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE OF SOUTH AFRICA ★ MARCH 2009

10 000 young communists to the ANC elections front

Cdes Buti Manamela and Kholiswa Fihlane on the elections list

The Young Communist League of South Africa (YCL) held a National Lekgotla from the 19-22 February 2008 to prepare and discuss our programme of action over the next two years and to adopt an activity plan for the forthcoming general election.

The National Lekgotla was attended by all the 25 National Committee members, five representatives from each province and District Secretaries from our 52 District Structures. The National Lekgotla was convened also within the background of our successful National Council which was held last year December, and resolutions from that meeting were assessed and processed into the action plan.

Forthcoming general election 2009

The National Committee reaffirmed its previous decision to support the ANC in the forthcoming National General Elections. We are extremely excited that the elections are taking place within the context of a reconfigured Alliance, with more determination on the part of the ANC to include the Alliance partners in the elections process.

Some of the issues that excite us include:

- The fact that the ANC Manifesto was as a result of a protracted engagement between the Alliance partners;
- The inclusion of many communists and trade-unionists in the list of the ANC to parliament flowing directly from ANC structures;
- The continuous engagement with Al-



On the parliamentary list: YCL Deputy National Chair Kholiswa Fihlane

liance partners on the post-elections implementation of the ANC Manifesto; and

- A common and exciting elections campaign that is inclusive of all our structures at all level.

We are also excited that the National Chairperson David Maseondo, the Deputy National Chairperson Kholiswa Fihlane and the National Secretary Buti Manamela were nominated to become public representatives, together with many other young communists who were nominated from province to province lists. This is a reflection of confidence on the part of Alliance structures towards our leadership and the role that we can play in governance.

The National Lekgotla decided to re-



On the parliamentary list: YCL National Secretary Buti Manamela

lease both the Fihlane and Manamela to serve as public representatives, while they retain their positions in the YCL. The meeting decided not to avail David Maseondo as public representative. We will advise our structures on the reasons why he should not avail himself as soon as these reasons have been communicated to Comrade Maseondo.

The National Lekgotla, however, expressed concern on the fact that very few young people managed to make it into the list across the provincial structures, and hope that in future, young people make it into the list.

The National Lekgotla has adopted an election activity plan. The elements of the plan will include:

Continued on page 23