

# Cosatu Congress report back



October 2009

Voice of the South African Communist Party

# Unsebenzi



# RED OCTOBER

Forward to an affordable National Health Insurance

FIFTY WRITING YEARS – AFRICAN COMMUNIST TURNS 50

RED OCTOBER

# Forward to NHI – Forward to health care for all!

*SACP throws its weight behind the ANC's election pledge for National Health Insurance and affordable healthcare*

By KHAYA MAGAXA

The Red October campaign on the NHI scheme (National Health Insurance) was launched at a packed meeting of several hundred people at the OR Tambo Hall in Khayelitsha. Addressing the meeting, SACP General Secretary Blade Nzimande said the NHI is a system that provides health for everybody, rich and poor, irrespective of class, colour and creed.

He stressed that health is a basic right for all. And that those who are financially better off will have to contribute more than those who are poor, but that ultimately all people stand to benefit. Powerful business interests are opposed to the NHI because it will cut into their profits, he said. The private sector is predicting doom with the implementation of the NHI and is blackmailing government. The answer, he said, is to mobilise the masses in support of the NHI and defeat the agenda of the bosses.

Cde Nzimande also called for all hospital services that have been outsourced to be brought back into the folds of hospitals and delivered through the public sector.

YCL National Secretary, Cde Buti Manamela, said "The NHI will mean better facilities, more hospitals, and more clinics. It will mean more accessible and affordable health services, especially for people in the rural areas and the townships. It will mean quality health care for all. Even President Obama is taking his lead from President Zuma.

He is also trying to introduce a national health service. And like President Zuma, he is experiencing resistance from the elites. As the youth, we have to mobilise against this resistance in our country. We have much to gain from the NHI,



**SACP leadership launches the Red October Campaign (from left): Chairperson Cde Gwede Mantashe, General Secretary Cde Blade Nzimande, Deputy General Secretary Jeremy Cronin, and Deputy Chairperson Joyce Moloi-Moropa**

especially with our challenges of unemployment and HIV-Aids. As the youth, we have to ensure that the NHI becomes a reality."

Cde Manamela also stressed the need for the government to ensure that nurses get quality training and are retained in their jobs.

ANC Deputy General Secretary Thandi Modise, said the NHI proposal was part of the ANC's Election Manifesto and will have to be implemented as the ANC had a mandate from the people to do so. She welcomed the SACP's Red October Campaign on the NHI, and said she hoped it would be as successful as previous Red October campaigns. She said that the SACP also needed to give a new thrust to the Financial Sector Campaign.

Cde Modise said the ANC today is a

different kind of ANC and will actively work with the SACP in its Red October campaigns. She also urged the Party to work closely with the Department of Health in its campaign.

Cde Nzimande said red forums should be held in communities and workplace, to discuss the NHI and ensure it is properly understood by the people. There should, where necessary, also be marches and demonstrations to "expose the greed of capitalist health institutions and mobilise our people to roll back the market in the provision of health care". ●

*Cde Magaxa is SACP Western Cape Provincial Secretary*

**See Forward to affordable people's health service – Page 5**

RED OCTOBER

# Roll back the corrupting intersection between private accumulation and public service!

*We must end the rein of the 'tenderpreneurs' – the struggle against corruption is at the heart of advancing our national democratic revolution, writes Cde Blade Nzimande*

On Sunday 4 October 2009, the SACP held a lively and vibrant rally to launch its national 2009 Red October Campaign in Khayelitsha, Cape Town. It was one of the best attended rallies in that part of our country, and once more underlined the mobilisational capacity of the SACP through campaigns that capture the hearts and minds of the workers and the poor of our country.

There are three inter-related aspects to our 2009 Red October Campaign:

- Building an affordable and quality health system for all;
- Intensifying the struggle against corruption in all of society; and
- Disrupting the intersection between business and public service interests.

## **A quality health system**

We have previously said much about the centrality of the establishment of a national health insurance scheme (NHI) for the provision of accessible, affordable and quality health care for all South Africans.

The fundamental principle of an NHI is that of ensuring that every South African, rich or poor, black or white, employed or unemployed, is covered by this scheme. The aim of the scheme is to ensure that no South African must be expected to

make an upfront payment for health services, whether in the public or private health care sector. In addition, those who have resources must subsidise those who do not have, and that we build an equitable health care system, where we move away from the current unequal and unjust, regime, where more than 60% of resources poured into health services benefit only about 14% of the population, which happens to be on private medical aid schemes.

The reason for the mobilisation of our people around the NHI is two-fold.

Firstly, to explain the principles and objectives of an NHI; and how such a system is going to benefit the overwhelming majority of our people.

Secondly, to counter the reactionary efforts by the capitalist classes in the private health sector to defeat or undermine

government's efforts towards the establishment of the NHI. It is our conviction, as has been consistently shown in the past, that only mobilised popular power can defeat the greed of capitalism and ensure that the workers and the poor themselves drive programmes for their own benefit.

To this end, we shall use our 2009 Red October Campaign to convene thousands of red forums, in communities and workplaces, to discuss the NHI and ensure that it is properly understood by all our people. Where necessary we shall also be calling marches and demonstrations to expose the greed of capitalist health institutions and mobilise our people to roll back the market in the provision of health care.

## **Disrupting the public service-private business links**

The second and major focus of our 2009 Red October Campaign is that of disrupting the relationship between private business interests and public service.

Most promising revolutions, especially in capitalist environments, have faltered and even been rolled back because of the triumph of money and moneyed interests over the interests of the workers and the poor.

**We shall mobilise our people to expose the greed of capitalist health institutions and roll back the market**

Some of our detractors, both inside and outside our movement, argue that this focus of our campaign is inappropriate on the grounds that ours is a multi-class movement that embraces all social classes. Yes, this is true, BUT:

- Much as our movement is a multi-class movement (and that is precisely where its strength lies), at the same time it is a movement biased towards the workers and the poor. Such a bias is informed by the fact that our struggle is about fighting poverty and to drastically reduce social inequalities in society. To achieve these objectives, the interests of the overwhelming majority of our people (the workers and the poor) must be at the centre of our ongoing national democratic revolution. The very concept of a national democratic revolution is premised on the leading role of the working class in the transformation of South African society.

- Being a multi-class movement is not the same as class neutrality. In fact class neutrality is a myth, and is often used as a cover to privilege the interests of elites over those of the masses.

- We are also faced with the very real danger of two separate, but deeply inter-related, threats. The first one is that of the use of access to state power or holding of public office as a platform for private capitalist accumulation. Existing in our society today is the practice of use of public office to give out tenders by those who hold such office for their own benefit and to dispense patronage. This is what our 2009 Special Congress discussion document refers to as 'the throwing of the javelin' or 'tenderpreneurship'.

In fact such practices are completely unfair to those entrepreneurs, especially SMMEs, who are working hard to build their businesses, while those occupying state office and simultaneously issue tenders for their own benefit have a hugely

unfair advantage.

The second threat is that of using business influence to try and capture the state so that it serves such private business interests. It is for this reason, among others, that both the ANC and SACP have resolved that their leadership collectives at various levels must declare their business interests and associations.

We shall use our Red October Campaign to openly discuss these dangers and spread awareness and ideological consciousness about the dangers of this relationship to our people.

This by no means implies, as some of our detractors also say, that people in leadership positions are prevented from pursuing business interests. But these cannot be pursued in a parasitic manner and at the direct expense of servicing the interests of our people as a whole.

Disrupting the intersection between holding of public office and using such to pursue private business interests, as well as the opposite phenomenon, is an absolute condition for building a developmental state.

### Intensify the struggle against corruption

The third component of our Red October Campaign is that of intensifying the struggle against corruption. While this is distinct from the above, there is a relationship between the two. It is usually on the interface between public office and

Through the organised mass power and awareness of our people we can deepen the struggle against corruption

private business interests that corruption festers.

However, corruption is not only found in the public sector, but it is also widespread practice in the private sector, and must therefore be rooted out in the whole of society.

It is for this reason that the SACP welcomed the initiative by the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union to expose corruption and mismanagement in South African Airways.

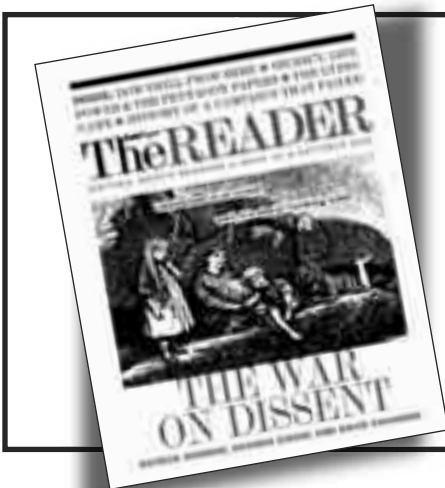
Through the convening of red forums the SACP seeks to mobilise our people and build their confidence in exposing corruption. Often people are aware of corrupt practices, but are afraid to act because sometimes it is powerful individuals who are involved. Or even where they point out such maladies no action is taken. We believe that through the organised mass power and awareness of our people we can deepen the struggle against corruption and that appropriate action is taken whenever this happens.

As we say in our Special Congress discussion document, the struggle against corruption is not only a moral struggle, but it is a principled political struggle at the heart of defending and advancing the national democratic revolution. It is an essential condition for the realisation of the five priorities of the ANC-led alliance election manifesto.

Once more our Red October Campaign is a call to all communists to be at the forefront of the mobilisation of our people... for the sake of our revolution! Let every SACP branch and district convene as many of the red forums as possible during this month and beyond.

Asikhulume!!

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*Cde Nzimande is SACP General Secretary and Minister for Higher Education.*



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NHI

# Forward to an affordable health system for all

*Cde Sheila Barsel says that, as communists, we must engage to ensure South Africans achieve the health care they deserve*



**Sheila Barsel**

This article focuses on the National Health Insurance (NHI) as it is envisaged by the ANC. It will, therefore, involve the inclusion of the private sector (practitioners and hospitals) in service delivery, although this will be strongly monitored,

and will be exactly the same standard as would be delivered by any public sector health facilities.

Future articles in Umsebenzi and The African Communist will explore what a fully socialised health service would be in a socialist South Africa

The present dual and iniquitous health system mirrors the South African socio-economic reality. This is an historical outcome of colonial and Apartheid capitalism. These racialised class inequalities have been reinforced and compounded by post-Apartheid, macroeconomic policies. It is, , hardly surprising that the health profile of the country corresponds to this duality.

It is estimated that, between 1996 and 2004, life expectancy at birth declined from 57 to 49. There are also racial and class differences. For example, the lowest life expectancy was 47.8 for African males and the highest was for Indian females at 66, followed by white females at 65.6 (Day and Gray, 2008).

This is consistent with the worsening of the South African burden of disease



which strongly features four main elements:

- **HIV-Aids** – the single most important cause of premature mortality which, with the associated epidemic of tuberculosis (TB), accounts for a dramatic decline in life expectancy at birth
- **Cardiovascular and other diseases (such as diabetes)** – which are associated with ‘lifestyle’ factors such as smoking, diet, stress and lack of exercise
- **Violence and injury**
- **Established infectious diseases (such as TB), malnutrition & diseases of poverty.**

We have successfully created a non-racial public health administration and in many areas access has increased. But buildings have become dilapidated, vacancies for staff have not been filled and quality has deteriorated.

In the last decade, as a result of the neo-liberal macro economic policy of Gear, public funding declined – leading to serious under-staffing of the public health sectors, with many important staff positions remaining vacant. The shortage of staff has not only affected the quality of the actual services but has meant that administration and upkeep of health facilities has not been maintained. The country is faced not only with a heavier burden of disease but also with a shortage of human resources, poor management of health institutions, poor financial management and inadequate funding and deteriorating infrastructure.

Many of our public hospitals have been refurbished and management improved but there are also many which experience management failure related to employment of incompetent managers. This has resulted in some of the refurbished hospitals not being adequately maintained and so deteriorating.

Another challenge facing the public health sector is the shortage of drugs at health facilities especially, but not only, HIV-Aids drugs. The state has not been able to access medicines at lower prices because of the cartels in the pharmaceutical industry.

Despite the effort of government to reg-



Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital – the biggest hospital in Africa

ulate the private health sector, experts agree that the sector is riddled with inefficiencies, excessive administrative expenses and inflated prices.

The desire to improve the health status of South Africans, in particular working class and poor people, is at the heart of the debate on the NHI.

The ANC announced in its 2009 Election Manifesto that the NHI would be one of the key priorities of the coming five years. President Jacob Zuma, in his State of the Nation Address, confirmed that the NHI is one of the key programs of government.

The NHI will focus on specific aspects of health care – such as the design of a redistributive funding mechanism, administration, benefits and scope of coverage. To effectively respond to the worsening disease burden in South Africa and to improve the health profile of the population, the implementation of the NHI calls for a comprehensive strategy to develop human resources.

These should be located within a framework geared to re-orientating the health system towards implementing the primary health care approach and the district health system. This would lay a basis for a comprehensive transformation

of the health system, beyond the redistribution of resources and expansion of access.

It must also be connected with the transformation of the management and operation of health institutions.

The NHI will be funded through a combination of current sources of government health spending, including the removal of the tax subsidy for medical schemes, and a modest mandatory contribution from employers and employees split equally.

Contribution will be less than what is currently commonly paid to medical schemes. Low-income earners will be exempt from paying any contribution, as will unemployed people. All these funds would be placed in a single pool to be used to fund all health care in the public and private health sectors under condi-

**In his State of the Nation address Pres Zuma confirmed the NHI as one of government's key programmes**

tions that apply to all health care service providers, whether public or private.

One of the main concerns raised by various commentators is the future role of the private sector.

The policy of government and the ANC for the current proposals for the NHI is that the private sector is an important role-player in the delivery of health care.

The National Health Insurance will:

- **Create a publicly administered and publicly funded National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF):** The NHIF will be a single-payer fund that receives funds, pools resources and purchases services on behalf of the entire population.
- **Expand health coverage to all South Africans:** This means there will be no financial barrier to access health care. All South Africans will be equally able to access comprehensive and quality health care. Health services covered by NHI will be a free at the point of use - no upfront payment will be required by the doctor, health facility or hospital.
- **Provide comprehensive coverage of health services:** South Africans will be entitled to a comprehensive range of



health benefits, including primary care, inpatient and outpatient care, dental care, optical services, prescription drugs and supplies. The services will be provided on a uniform basis at all health facilities.

● **Publicly and privately delivered health care:** NHI will be simply a financing system, with government collecting and allocating money for health care. Health care is provided by private and public sectors but paid for publicly by the NHI Fund. To ensure improvement in quality standards, all providers will be accredited before the NHI funds them. Services of all providers will be monitored and assisted to maintain the standards required by the NHI.

● **Social solidarity:** Services will be delivered based on need rather than on ability to pay. Coverage by NHI will not be interrupted and everyone will have access to the same health care. This means that access to good quality health care will not depend on employment status. Social solidarity also means those who can afford to pay for health care will subsidise those who cannot afford to pay.

● **Save enough on excessive adminis-**

**trative costs:** Currently this happens as a result of having so many different payment systems. It will, therefore, not be necessary for the Government to increase its contribution to total health care spending as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product.

● **Control costs:** Cost-effective payment methods will be made through negotiated capitation costing systems for doctors. Global budgeting for hospitals and bulk purchasing of drugs and supplies will be implemented.

Current consensus is that the NHI be implemented in a phased manner over the next five years to allow for consultation, policy making and legislative review. Before implementation the ANC government will consult with all sectors affected, especially workers, employers, health providers and suppliers and health funders.

The case for change in health care financing in South Africa is strong. The introduction of mandatory NHI is urgent. This becomes more urgent as we move towards the deadline for achieving the Millennium Development Goals for health.

The implementation of the NHI will re-

quire government to develop partnerships to ensure accelerated transformation of the national health system.

Parallel efforts to improve health services and introduce efficiencies will focus, amongst others, on the improvement of human resources for health and physical infrastructure, effective and efficient management especially financial, the establishment of effective information and communication technology for health and special focus on quality of care, norms and standards.

Once the White Paper process has started, all SACP members must study the government proposal on the NHI, engage in debates, especially at their workplaces and within their communities, so that the quality of the final product after consultations will be what all South Africans deserve.

Communist cadres to the front to build a better and integrated national health system that benefits all South Africans – especially so that the workers and the poor have access to a system that they deserve!

Socialism is the future – build it now!

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*Cde Barsel is a member of the SACP CC*

COSATU CONGRESS

# Our 10th congress was most successful ever

*Delegates instructed Cosatu leaders to walk through the door opened by Polokwane, writes Cosatu President, Cde Sidumo Dlamini*

**C**osatu's 10th National Congress, which took place from 21-24 September 2009, was undoubtedly the most successful in our 24-year history! All the 3 000 or so who attended will remember this momentous week for years to come.

Congress reaffirmed its historic revolutionary mission and delegates proved yet again, beyond any doubt, that Cosatu remains the most democratic, representative and dynamic organisation fighting on behalf of the workers and the poor majority in South Africa.

But what emerged from the 2009 Congress was that alongside the traditional militancy and fire, which Cosatu has always displayed, delegates also demonstrated a degree of maturity. This was an organisation which is no longer just protesting and demanding but intervening concretely in the implementation of state policy.

The resolutions lay the basis for advancing the interests and aspirations of the oppressed and exploited masses of our country for the next three years.

There was a feeling of confidence however that these resolutions are not just idealistic beliefs, but policies that are going to be implemented in practice by our ANC allies in government - provided of course that we continue to maintain the pressure. The only thing that could lead us to fail would be complacency.

Congress recommitted Cosatu to fight tirelessly to defend workers' constitutional and legal rights – the right to be treated with dignity, paid a living wage, protected from unfair dismissal, receive the benefits they are entitled to, and be free from racism and abuse.

Delegates were determined to put an end to casualisation and labour broking,

which have no place in a civilised society and they must not just be regulated – they must go!

Congress was also adamant that the workers in the ranks of the security forces are equally entitled to all their rights, and resolved to fight attempts to 'deunionise' the SANDF and deprive soldiers of their constitutional rights to form and join unions. Delegates condemned the government's ill-conceived and unconstitutional plan to ban unions and dismiss their members for taking part in demonstrations.

Banning unions would set a very dangerous precedent and could pave the way for similar moves against other public sector unions. At the same time it will do nothing to help resolve the soldiers' genuine grievances. Strong well-organised trade unions provide the best basis for resolving disputes peacefully through negotiations.

The 10th Congress met against the grim backdrop of a world economic crisis, which has already led to a job-loss bloodbath and threatens tens of thousands more jobs.

Delegates rightly insisted that workers cannot be expected to be the ones to pay the price for a crisis which is none of their making. They resolved that the struggle to improve working conditions and to de-

fend jobs under conditions of economic crisis has to be sharpened rather than relaxed, and that more than ever, Cosatu unions need to fight to the bitter end to secure the best agreements for our members.

The very bleak economic climate was however accompanied by an exceptionally bright political climate. Cosatu Congresses are always addressed by the leaders of our allies - the ANC, the SACP and Sanco – but this year it was definitely not a protocol formality, but a real comradesly exchange of views between allies, who are working closely together as an alliance. Congress delegates were much encouraged by the knowledge that we are in alliance with the ANC, whose leadership is rebuilding the organisation and getting our revolution back on track after a period when it went temporarily off the rails.

Resolutions instructed the incoming leadership to walk through the doors that the historic Polokwane Conference opened up for us. That task starts by ensuring that we build the Alliance into a strategic centre of power and is functional at all levels.

The Congress demonstrated the workers' full confidence in the inspiring leadership that continues to be provided by comrade Jacob Zuma, who is seen to hold the interests of the workers dearly in his heart.

Delegates also reaffirmed Cosatu's continued solidarity with the SACP and insisted that we must no longer pay lip service to building and supporting the party, but take practical steps to actually provide material support to the party.

A notable feature of the 10th National Congress was that Alliance partners disagreed on a few matters, but were able to

**Congress instructed the incoming leaders to walk through the doors opened for us at Polokwane**



Delegates acknowledge their past political and worker leaders during the Congress

argue them out in a friendly, dignified and positive fashion. We shall continue with this dialogue in the months to come. But on all the central challenges we face, the alliance partners are working together to lead the nation out of recession.

Congress was totally united in wanting to implement the ANC Government's priority policies in health, crime, rural development, education, poverty alleviation, decent work and economic development. The political victory of Polokwane in 2007 is now being converted into concrete policies to overcome the recession and improve the lives of the majority.

At the centre of these is the Framework Agreement, South Africa's response to the world economic crisis and its many excellent policies to roll back the recession, save jobs and create new, decent ones.

Government and labour are fully on board and we shall be keeping up the pressure on business to stop dragging their feet.

Congress has said that we must make the state focus on nothing else but to serve our people and not business interests. Delegates sent a warning to any who think corruption has become a way of life in government and in society. We

are going to openly name and shame those guilty of corruptly using public office for private enrichment. Any officials, including those in unions, who are involved in corruption must resign now and face the might of the law.

Congress committed us to take forward and realise the vision of our 2015 plan. As we go back to our unions and structures we will be preparing and sharpening our instruments of war - reinforcing our ideological foundations, building cadres, and uniting society behind a common programme for socialist transformation.

Cosatu will also be focussing its energies on building our organisations, meeting our recruitment targets, making sure our engines are functional and we are providing top-of-the range service to our members.

**Cosatu's presence  
will be felt and  
our socialist voice  
heard in the corridors  
of power**

This Congress has said that we want a national democratic revolution that is working-class led and with a truly working-class bias. This means we must take the revolution along the socialist path, not the capitalist path.

From now onwards Cosatu's presence will be felt and our socialist voice will be heard right inside the corridors of power. Whether on issues of the planning commission, monitoring and evaluation, budget priorities, deployment of cadres, economic policy, industrial strategy we will be there to contest neoliberal tendencies wherever we see them.

Congress warned that we will no longer tolerate employers who ignore their obligations to protect the health and safety of their workers and fail to implement measures to keep our environment clean. As we did with HIV and Aids we will work with civil society organisations to stop the reckless pollution and destruction of our environment. Issues of climate change are matters of life and death!

The message of Cosatu's 10th National Congress was: Let us seize the strategic initiative and ensure that we use this moment to consolidate and multiply our gains as we intensify our struggle for socialism. ●

COSATU CONGRESS

# We must prepare for fierce resistance to working class hegemony

*The Left has made major advances since the 9th Congress, but now is not the time for honeymoon-period complacency*

Address to the 10th Cosatu Congress by Cde Blade Nzimande, SACP General Secretary

It has certainly been a tumultuous three years since Cosatu's 9th National Congress in 2006. South Africa is a different place and it is sometimes difficult to believe how dramatically the ANC, our Alliance and government have changed in the space of just 36 months.

At Cosatu's 9th Congress, we observed then that it was taking place during an extremely challenging and complicated period in the history of our revolution and that all our formations in the Alliance were faced with complex political challenges. Hence our refrain 'The revolution is on trial'.

At that time, we were in the grip of the intolerance and offensive of the 1996 Class Project, our state organs were under siege, Cosatu and the SACP were being subjected to ridicule and derision, particularly as a result of our principled support for the then Deputy President of the ANC, Comrade Jacob Zuma. The Alliance was a pretence. The working class was viewed as a general nuisance to the domination of the class project.

When we met at Cosatu's Central Committee two years ago, we diagnosed that our revolution was under threat of "palace politics", noting that this "is the politics of backstabbing, pursuit of individual wealth, use of state organs to settle factional scores, use of media leaks to destroy each other, patronage as a means to consolidate political (and often class) power."

But three months later, the ANC Polok-



Re-elected: Cosatu SG Zwelinzima Vavi

wane Conference changed the course of history in our country when the general membership of the ANC and the working class reclaimed our organisation.

The winds of change have continued to blow since Polokwane, also freeing Cosatu from the menace of false leaders. The SACP also cleansed itself as we had also produced some of our own political factory faults. Then in September last year, a KwaZulu-Natal judge confirmed to the world what we all knew – and what Cosatu had the courage to say way back at its Central Committee in 2005 – that President Zuma's rights were vio-

**We can look back in happiness – we have rescued the ANC from the Class Project**

lated in a politically motivated prosecution aimed at destroying his path to the presidency. And so, exactly a year ago, our revolutionary movement turned the corner and began a new journey leaving behind a class project and programme that required the marginalisation of the SACP and Cosatu and the demobilisation of the ANC.

The recall of Thabo Mbeki, the most powerful leader on the continent, was significant for African and world history as it demonstrated a peaceful removal of a sitting president through democratic and non-violent means. Despite the warnings of the doomsayers, South Africa moved neatly from one political administration to another, preserving its international standing and proud democratic legacy.

Comrades, with all that we have been through and conquered, we have every right to look back with mixed feelings – anger that our President and our organisations have suffered intolerable abuse and pain, happiness that the ANC has been rescued from the clutches of the 1996 Class Project and relief that an atmosphere of tolerance, openness and respect now prevails.

As the representatives of the working class, we in Cosatu and the SACP must never forget that one of the principal aims of the Class Project was to drive us out of the Alliance so that monopoly capital, senior state leadership and a BEE faction of capital could hold the ANC hostage. This project had the support of some sections of the media and analysts who actively promoted the marginalisation of

the SACP and Cosatu and sold the notion that it would be better for everyone if the Left was to break away from the ANC.

We stand here today, able to proudly declare that “The Left hasn’t left; but the Right has left”. The ANC has returned to its pro-poor, pro-worker bias, the way its founding fathers intended it to be. The Right has now regrouped under the banner of COPE, a failed attempt by the class project to regain its footing. It includes people who operated in stealth in the ranks of our organisations, including the trade union movement, to sow turmoil and disunity. Some of them are now trying to reinvent themselves and their hopeless agenda by impersonating Cosatu in a COPE-sponsored puppet show.

Comrades, it is no secret that it was the voice and might of the workers which first rebelled against the capitalist agenda of the class project and propelled the process of change. Cosatu, like the SACP, was able to stand up to the abusive use of state resources and speak out for the long list of casualties, including Comrade Zuma, long before it was fashionable to be associated with him.

There should be no doubt that our resounding victory in the April elections was delivered by the workers of our country. It is time that we, the leadership of the Alliance, acknowledge and pay tribute to the workers for the Polokwane and election victories.

It is also an imperative now that Cosatu remains united in this new phase of the revolution as part of the motive forces for the deepening of the national democratic revolution and in our struggle for socialism. There is no time for complacency during the honeymoon period of our new government.

We are in the midst of the worst capitalist crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Still late last year illusions prevailed that South Africa was relatively insulated. As part of maintaining this illusion we were being told as the socialist left that we must not be ‘reckless’ by making statements that may further upset the markets.

This illusion has now been cruelly exposed. In the first half of 2009, with a deep local recession, nearly half a million jobs have been lost in the first half of this year, thousands of workers have been put on part-time, factories have been closed and businesses liquidated. Some 50 000 people are being black-listed by the credit

bureaux per month, and car and home repossessions have soared.

Our view continues to be that capitalist crises are not an abnormality but a norm. There are no solutions within capitalism for these crises, they are systemic and inevitable as long as we remain imprisoned within the capitalist system.

We have said that in response to this crisis, we need both defensive and offensive measures. We welcome the National Framework Agreement as agreed to at Nedlac as an important defensive measure and shield against this crisis. In implementing this agreement we need to ensure that it is not workers who are made to pay for a crisis brought about by capitalist greed.

For us, offensive measures must be anti-capitalist measures that begin to undermine the very logic of the system. When we come out of this crisis it should not merely be a return to the past, but we need something radically different that is capable of meeting the needs of the workers and the poor of our country.

Comrades, we must be prepared for fierce resistance to these transformational imperatives that the Alliance agenda in its totality is advancing. This opposition will come from opposition political parties, amongst others. They are now seeking to club together against the ANC. The founders of COPE and their liberal suburban allies had all predicted a democratic melt-down as a result of the recall of former President Mbeki a year ago. Far from there being a melt-down, there is an obvious flowering of democratic openness and of democratic debate in our country. Even the leader of the opposition, Helen Zille, is compelled to concede this. It is only a few lonely figures in COPE who still harbour nostalgia for the years of denialism and a cult of the personality. But COPE, the DA, and a section of the media will continue to advance their anti-worker agenda, and they will use three basic lines of argument:

- The democratic “melt-down” card;
- The personality assassination diversionary card; and

**We must not come out of the economic crisis simply to return to anti-poor systems of the past**

- The pessimism about state power card.

The headlines in much of the media continuously play into the suburban opposition agenda with “melt-down” stories. What they fear is a working-class hegemony in our country, and they want to project working-class hegemony as inherently antagonistic to democracy and our constitution. In order to spread their lies about our position as the left, the opposition parties seek to conflate certain ill-considered, unprincipled, factionalist statements that emerge from within the broad ranks of our movement from time to time. That is why the SACP has said that we must nip in the bud any signs of chauvinism from within our movement.

The second card with which we are all familiar is the personalised assassination diversionary card. We are constantly plunged into diversions – personalised attacks on life-styles of leaders, a media created 2012 ANC election contest years before any ANC electoral conference, and the like. Again, from with the ANC-led alliance we must be careful not to get unduly caught up in these diversions, which simply draw us away from our core NDR and socialist tasks.

The third card, which the suburban liberal politicians, play is to sow demoralisation about the importance and potential capacities of the state. Since Polokwane, the suburban liberals sense that they no longer have the same access to state power, and so they pick on issues (some of them real issues – like corruption in parastatals, or in line departments, or in local government) in order to spread a message of demoralisation about the prospects of building a developmental state. We must deal decisively with corruption in the public (and private) sectors, but we are doing so in order to build a developmental state capable of leading a national democratic revolution under working class hegemony.

More than ever before it is absolutely imperative that we deepen international working class solidarity in order get rid of the crises ridden capitalist system that has brought so much havoc to lives of billions of people throughout the world.

The SACP wishes to further commit itself to solidarity with the struggles of the peoples of Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Palestine, Western Sahara and Cuba. We especially wish to call upon this congress to deepen its solidarity with the Cuban people and take forward the call for the release of the Cuban Five. ●

## SERVICE DELIVERY PROTESTS

# 'Government in this country must be at ward level'

*Umsebenzi interviewed former Cosatu unionist and now Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Cde Sicelo Shiceka, on the service delivery protests*

**How many municipalities did you visit in response to the service delivery protests?**

We've visited all the municipalities in the country, if you include the MECs in the provinces and the departments. And we are finalising a national report...

**But how many did you personally visit? You seem to often intervene directly yourself?**

Well, before the elections I visited all 25 municipalities in the North West Province. Since the protests I've visited about 19.

**So when you go, do you go with the MECs and the Premiers? Or do you just rock up in a municipality?**

No, no, I go with the MECs, and when I go into communities, I also go with the councillors. Everybody has to be involved in the process. We're in a system of cooperative governance.

**And how are you received? Aren't the residents hostile?**

No, no, not all! People like it when the national government comes. They see us as more detached, and that we can give them more. People receive us happily, warmly. They get excited. They want to engage. And it's not just Africans, but Whites too, the Afrikaner community in particular.

**So what are you learning with these visits? Why these protests?**

The first thing is that there's a lack of communication – a social distance – between the government and the people. It's not that people expect everything overnight. But they want to know what's happening. If you tell them that others are getting today, that you don't have the resources to also deliver to them now, but they'll get their turn soon, they'll understand. The second thing is that an elite has developed amongst ourselves – 'tenderpreneurs' – people who are only concerned about themselves, about tenders. These people benefit for themselves out of state resources. 80% of what's supposed to go to the people goes to them. The people have to survive on the remaining 20%. Now you have the elite fighting the masses. There's corruption, fraud, nepotism. People are revolting against these wrong practices. Then

**'Tenderpreneurs' take 80% of resources – the people get only 20% and are revolting against these practices**

there's the in-fighting in the municipalities – between the Mayor, the Speaker, the Chief Whip, and sometimes also the Municipal Manager. The municipality gets divided, and service delivery suffers. But, of course, there are also good municipalities whose best practices need to be emulated. Unfortunately, these municipalities sometimes get over-shadowed by those that are not performing.

**But to what extent is the average resident aware of the corruption? Aren't the residents too caught up in the daily grind of existence to care about that? Their main concern is services?**

Yes, but that's why they are very aware of the corruption. They know that this and that person has an expensive car and lives it up, but that person has no skills. How did he get the money? And there are these people, like the relatives and friends of the Mayor or Speaker or Municipal Manager, they have got big jobs in the municipality – but they don't have the qualifications. And people see how some of the councillors are living. They see the fraud and corruption all around them.... Actually, there's a four-year-old who was asked: What do you want to be when you grow up? And the child said 'a councillor'. They asked: But why? And the child said, 'They drive big cars!' (Laughter).... You see, people are very



**AmaMpondo traditional leaders welcome Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Cde Sicelo Shiceka, during a recent intergovernmental and community dialogue visit**

aware of what's happening – and they are fed up! But the provincial and national government, they are not seeing these things. They are too far from the municipalities. But it doesn't mean that they're not happening....

#### **What do you mean?**

Well, it's about government as a whole. We have done wrong things. We give the people free this, free that. All these welfare grants. We have created a nation of dependants. People now sit, they wait for free things. I can tell you, when I used to go to Pondoland, where my grandmother is, if you don't have clothes, she will give you, but you must first plough or weed the area, or if it's harvesting season, you must harvest in exchange for the clothes. Even if you don't have money, you can pay through work. Today people say, 'we don't want to work, we're waiting for grants'. It means we are creating lazy people who can't compete with others in the world of nations.. Now we must change that. People who are able-bodied, they must work and get paid. I've just got a letter from the President. He wants me to run a programme called 'Community

Works Programme', where people will have to work for at least 2 hours a week on infrastructure and they will get paid for that. While building infrastructure we will develop skills for our people. We have to look at innovative ways of creating conditions for work.

**So what do you think of the view that these protests are less about service delivery and more about residents feeling that they are not being consulted properly? Actually, that even where there is service delivery, its top-down delivery, without people taking ownership?**

Yes, people don't feel involved. They feel helpless. They must wait for the big truck of service delivery. If you create a nation like that, you are in trouble. We

**The provincial and national governments don't see it – they're too far from the municipalities**

are destroying people. To me, you must create an active citizenry – people who are clear that they are partners in development. This is their government. Things must be from the bottom up. But it's a problem, not only in government, but the ANC too. You know, in the past, in the early nineties, branches used to come up with their own resolutions for provincial and national conferences. Today we wait for policy papers. From Luthuli House. It has killed the creativity of the branches. We need to turn this system on its head.

**But what about the Ward Committees and all these wonderful provisions in the legislation and policies to encourage community participation in local government? There are weaknesses, but the Municipal Systems Act is a marvellous, marvellous, piece of legislation. It's got almost everything we fought for in the civics in the eighties, in the UDF.....**

But it's not working well. There are pockets of excellence, where people are doing fantastically well. But mostly it's not like that. It's not real, not genuine. We must involve the people honestly. You know, democracy is expensive. It needs to

be paid for. For a person to go to a Ward Committee in a rural area, it can take hours. So you have to pay that person for out-of-pocket expenses. Rural people can't participate otherwise. But look at the funding of municipalities. It's the stronger, urban municipalities that benefit the most. The weaker municipalities in the rural areas where you are supposed to put in the most resources, they are not supported enough. We must change these things - also the Ward Committees....

### What changes?

We must create street committees, block committees, section committees, and village committees in the rural areas under the leadership of Ward Committees. You must know every household in the ward. We need sub-committees in the Ward Committee, on health, education, and so on. The Ward Committee must take up every issue affecting the people, including housing, and all the development issues. All three spheres of government come together in the ward. The ward must become the face of cooperative governance. The Ward Committees must incorporate the CPFs (Community Policing Forums) and SGBs (School Governing Boards) and so on. And the CDWs (Community Development Workers) must be the full-time CEOs of the Ward Committees. The Ward Committee can also do practical things, like fix potholes, lighting, and so on. You see, people must have power in their own hands. They must be in charge of their destiny. They must be able to take things forward. They must not rely on protesting. They must also look at what resources are available within their communities so that they do not rely on the state all the time. There must be a cooperative in every ward. You communists will like that. That's part of your economic programme. Also, I do not think it is a good idea for councillors to chair the Ward Committees - because the people must have oversight over the council - and so a member from the community must chair the Ward Committee ....

**But won't that create a site of conflict between the councillor and the Ward Committee Chair? The Ward Committee Chair will want to undermine the Councillor so that he - usually he - can then become the next Councillor? When this model was discussed in 2000, this issue was raised, but it was decided that it would be better**

**for the Councillor to chair the Ward Committee. SALGA felt very strongly about this....**

I know this position will have its ups and downs as it can lead to a contest for power. But issues raised by Ward Committees must find expression in government decision-making. Of course, in any situation like this there will be conflict. You can't run away from it. The question is to how to manage the conflict in the best interests of the people.

**And about CPFs and SGBs being a part of the Ward Committees, would this be acceptable to the key stakeholders, including the other Ministers?**

Definitely. I spoke to the Minister of Police. And you must remember it is also in the interest of these comrades, because the CPFs and SGBs will be able to function more effectively. At the moment, there are too many structures out there serving the same constituency. We will engage with the other Ministers on these proposals on Ward Committees.

**So to what extent do you think the protests are a reflection not just of the failures of local government but of all three spheres of government? After all, many of the issues raised by the protestors do not fall within the competence of local government but the other spheres? Don't the protests also expose the failure of provincial and national government to give enough support to local government?**

Well I would say there are multiplicities of issues. At the core is the issue of people who are employed in local government who often don't have the requisite skills, but they are employed because they are loyal to a party or individuals in it. It means that they can't do their work and deliver services. They pander to the politicians, because they know they don't have the capacity. For them to remain there, they have to wash the hands, the feet of the politicians. But we need to professionalise the managers - they must belong to professional associations. We also need to give local government a bet-

**There are good municipalities whose practices must be emulated**

ter funding model. We must also synchronise the financial years of local government with national and provincial government. The national and provincial governments, towards the end of their financial year, dumps funds they don't spend onto local government. This also leads to corruption because it put a strain on the supply chain system. Municipalities feel they must quickly spend these funds before the end of their financial year in June.. Also some provinces are not giving support to local government. Partly this is a historical problem. Provinces were marginalised in the system. We must pass the legislation the Constitution requires on provincial government support for local government. But the provinces also did not fight for their own space. And when we do the review of Provinces, the White Paper, and White Paper on Local Government, these things must also be clarified. The other thing is that some provinces don't have a clue about what's happening in municipalities. You, know it's darkness there, there's no moon, no stars. Very dark. They don't know what's happening. They are too centralised, they must establish regional offices of the local government departments so that they are on the ground. And they must monitor things better. The national department gets reports from the municipalities - but these reports are sometimes inaccurate - and then we base our decisions on these reports. These things must stop if we are to succeed .

**But are there people with the requisite skills? Isn't there a shortage of skills?**

There are skills - but they go to the private sector, because we have not made government attractive. People must see government as an employer of choice. We can do simple things. We must find out what employees want and address those issues. Look at the buying power of government employees. If we include local government, they are about 1.5 million. We are the biggest employer. We can negotiate discount rates for our staff so that they can buy things cheaper. We must use our qualitative buying power to attract staff. Sometimes we are too bureaucratic and the staff get fed-up and leave. We chase people away. We need to turn this around.

**But are there really enough skills around? For example, the South African Institute of Civil Engineers says there's a huge lack of engineers. And, of course, municipali-**



Police arrest a protester at Rus-ter-Val

**ties have to compete with Eskom and other state-owned enterprises, and the private sector. And there are also huge challenges in getting management, project and financial skills.**

I don't agree. Yes there are problems, but we must work with the private sector. They make better profits when the municipalities and government as a whole function well. There's a lot of goodwill out there. I've spoken to the private sector. They are willing to help. I was talking the other day to the big construction companies. They are saying they can help us, even with Mthatha. But it's clear that the education system is not producing the skills we need. We still have to produce more skills even if we have more than we think.

**But can municipalities compete with the private sector? And often it's poor rural municipalities which can't afford to pay which need the skills most?**

I don't think the public sector will ever be able to match the private sector. That's why I'm saying we must use our collective buying power to allow our staff to buy things cheaper, which they will not be able to do if they work for the private sector. We can do many other creative things.

**What about the local government SETA? Is it performing well?**

We have to do more. And we have some resources - but we need to use it in a strategic way. These SETAs, they are not answerable to their line-function depart-

ments. They have a general dealer. That's why they are dysfunctional, most of them, because they are managed by a Minister who is not a line-function Minister. We must re-conceptualise them. The Minister of Higher Education must have a close relationship with the line-function Ministers.

**To move on to something else. So you swoop into communities that protest. Great! But then what? What comes out of it? There's a lot of bluster in the media. But how do the material conditions of the communities change? Do your visits lead to tangible changes or are they ultimately just symbolic?**

My approach is that a good leader is one who replicates himself. Whatever you do, must be sustainable. So when I go to communities I work with the provincial government and the councillors. The solutions must be found there. So people must be empowered. Our task is to mentor, to ensure that what we do is sustainable through others. And we must deliver. Yesterday I sent a team out to Bloemhof in the North West. I spoke to them last night. They went there with engineers. They found out that people are stealing cattle, and it's the skin of the cattle that's blocking the drains. So now the engineers are dealing with this.

We also followed up on our visit to Balfour. Several Ministers went back there with the provincial government to agree on a program to implement. We have been supporting municipalities in North West, in Mpumalanga. There are issues

we are addressing in municipalities in the Northern Cape. We have deployed a municipal manager in the Nelson Mandela metro. We are trying to help in Tshwane. We do this with the provincial government. We want to know what the challenges are in every municipality. We can't have a 'one size fits all' approach. We have to come with specific interventions for specific municipalities. These things must be done by the provinces so that local government is also owned by the provincial government and the provincial executive committees. They must understand what is happening in the municipalities in their provinces. Everybody in local government must contribute. Municipalities must have profiles of each and every citizen who lives in their areas, what contribution they can make, what skills they have, so that even the Whites, including the Afrikaners, are able to play their part. We deploy skilled people to help these municipalities in trouble. I can sit here and talk all day about what we are doing.

**Okay, but what's the overall strategy and program? What's the way forward from here?**

We have received reports on municipalities from the provinces. We are putting a final national report together. We are going to have a National Indaba on local government on the 21 and 22 October where we are going to take the whole nation on board. The President will also address all the Mayors and Municipal Managers on 20 October. Right now, the department is engaging with all the stakeholders so that when we get to the Indaba there's some consensus on what to discuss and how to go forward. We are going to determine a local government turn-around strategy by the end of the year. From January to March next year we will take this strategy to the municipalities, and we are going to engage with all stakeholders, including civil society. We want to create coordinating structures to monitor the implementation of the turn-around strategy, while at the same time establishing new forms of ward committees. It means the citizenry of the municipalities must be at the centre of local government. Government in this country must be at the ward level. Ward committees must also play their role in economic development. They must also help the ward to create a CBD (Central Business District) so that the money circulates within the ward, rather

than going out all the time. But people must also rally around to defeat wrong things in government. Local government is going to be a key rallying point for our democracy, and it must do more to build a non-racial society. We must desegregate geographical spaces, and reverse apartheid spatial patterns, and the divides between urban and rural areas, and between the townships and urban areas. We must create multi-class communities, where rich and poor can live side-by-side. We see that in Botswana. We can do it here.

**To what extent do you think the protests are a reflection of weaknesses in the model of local government we've got? Do you think we need changes to the model? If so, what?**

There are some problems, but it's not so much that the model is inappropriate. The major weakness of government is that we are very good in policy making but very thin in implementation. We have good policies, good laws with good intentions, but then few people implement them. I think if we implement the policies, 60% of the problems are gone. Now it's the same with ANC, SACP and COSATU resolutions. And then you have these same people who go into government. These are policy makers who don't have project management skills. They are not hard-nosed implementers. If you look at the apartheid system, those people accumulated a lot of experience and they were very clear on what is to be done. They were not job-hoppers jumping here and there to get more money.

**Of course, these protests are about many things. But don't you think they also reflect a fundamental alienation of people not just from government but society, and not just society, but people are also alienated from themselves? Partly it's the brutalisation of apartheid, but partly though we have done many, many good things since 1994, maybe through some of our policies, we've also fragmented and divided society too much, with too big a gap between insiders and outsiders, not least within Black communities? And while people the world over in similar situations as those protesting in our country often turn to violence and destruction of property and look for scapegoats like the foreigners in our case, don't you think these protests also reflect an increasing criminalisation of our society?**

In South Africa we had this communal way of life that people were used to. The



**Protesters setting up a roadblock in Standerton**

idea was that you would succeed because you worked in a group. You recognised collective wisdom. That's a communal way of life that you can say is a rudimentary form of communism. But now you have a system of capitalism that promotes individualism against the collective. It means people look only at themselves and not at others, and they are driven by a crass materialism. They want to succeed only for themselves. They want to enrich themselves. And then there's this blind following of Western culture. People like watching western movies and TV, and they are very Americanised. We have lost our value systems. We need to rediscover our moral compass, so that we are able to live for each other. And this will help us to succeed even in football and other sport, so that we play like a team. Also, as I said, we must build a nation of hard workers.. What nation do we want to be and what values do we want to underpin that nation is something we need to discuss. We've been through a violent past. And in the African way, we need a cleansing process, we need to look at this whole question of healing the nation.

**To effectively respond to the protests, local government needs to be much stronger. We may have to make changes to the current model. But no matter how good the model, it will not work unless we deal with factionalisation within the ANC and Alliance. Your response?**

There mustn't be micro-management of councillors by political parties. The ANC must accept that these are our deployees and we must have confidence in them. The ANC must give broad guid-

ance but the deployees must do their work. I've been in the PEC of the ANC in Gauteng since the 90s. We've never discussed a tender in the PEC. Now I'm in the ANC NEC and we've never a discussed a tender. These things are happening as you go down. Those structures are interfering unnecessarily in councils, about who to give tenders to and who to employ. We need to get a better system of how the ANC relates to municipalities.

**So what do you think the SACP can do to assist with the local government challenges?**

The SACP is a most important organisation. It must bring class consciousness to our people. Communists are supposed to be found everywhere on the ground. But I must tell you that many of the communists are not active in the ANC and other structures. Some of them are just theorists. And some of them don't understand historical and dialectical materialism. People are just using their own cleverness and not doing practical things. But also, it worries me, in South Africa, the culture of reading has gone down. We must bring back that culture. When we were banned people used to read in a team the material they got. Now the Communists must play a role to get this started again. But the Communist Party must also be campaign-orientated and it must mobilise the people.

**So when are you coming back to the Communist Party?**

(Laughter) Well, you must persuade me to come back after my challenging experiences in the Party....But you people must carry on... ●

## SERVICE DELIVERY PROTESTS

# A cry for the pace of change to reach more people – and faster

*Cde Lechesa Tsenoli argues that only substantial investment in social, economic and municipal infrastructure will stem the tide of protests*



An early manifestation of discontent: Protesters march through Siyathemba in July

The number one challenge in our country is poverty and inequality. Most of the challenge is inherited from the past Colonialism of a Special Type (CST) and apartheid and the capitalist underpinnings of both. The 15 years of democratic dispensation has only begun, albeit significantly, the process of undoing it, despite the conservative macro-economic stance after 1996.

The protests in the townships, particularly in the informal settlements, are a cry for the pace of change to reach more people faster, including without the often reported nepotism, corruption and maladministration.

Poverty drives urbanization. War and conflict in countries to the north add to the pressure and struggle for limited resources in our cities, and towns including

rural villages, leading to unacceptable attacks and hostility to the newcomers and foreign nationals, as well as unplanned urban sprawl or densification that stress infrastructure badly.

Some of the protests have turned violent, suggesting high levels of frustration and rage at the reported conduct of some officials and councillors of municipalities..

These protests can also be ascribed to



Protesters in Ilitha Park in the Western Cape

failure of our system of cooperative governance, despite dramatic if still inadequate increase in financial support to municipalities. The impact has not been what it potentially could be. The limited housing allocation to municipalities compounded by poor preparations all-round, including controversially managed waiting lists, has led to serious protests. The ability of provinces to pick out weaknesses, provide urgent support, and generally be supportive has not produced desired results. Water and sanitation problems are another huge challenge. Pollution, especially industrial, and the poor management of our water resources is a threat we should not take lightly. Protests and warnings about these impending crises must be taken seriously.

The other reason lies in the inexperience of the majority of councillors given the fact that since 2006, 60 per cent of them are new and many have not acquired the necessary capacity to handle the challenging tasks they confront. Some of the councillors' controversial appointments through the list process remains a sore point. Some have never been accepted.

Interparty and intraparty conflict is often at the heart of the battles in councils about decisions, especially about procurement and employment practices, creating serious neglect of basic council functions. Provincial structures of the movement are often compromised themselves and thus are unable to provide effective leadership and support to innocent council officials and councillors who are under attack.

The progress recently reported in the 2009 developmental indicators can also be ascribed to many councillors and councils that are doing a good job in difficult circumstances. The current impact of the global crisis in municipalities has not made their job any easier. Poor people will clog their indigent registers, unemployment will show sharply in the default on payment of services. The scandal is when even government departments themselves do not pay nor offer municipalities help to determine the accuracy of the billing they often complain about. Tshwane Metro recently went to court to compel the National Department of Public Works to pay for services to schools.

The backlogs of service delivery can be ascribed to under-investment; especially by the public sector in social, economic and municipal infrastructure. The growing investment in this area must be expanded to sustainably stem the tide of protests. Key also in achieving the objective is for the Alliance at national, provincial and district or regional levels to meet to thrash out a political strategy to handle the governance challenges that are at

**The corrupting capitalist ethos is a key factor feeding the causes of the protests**

the heart of many of the protests we generalise as service delivery protests. We must add robustness in dealing with corruption that is equally at the heart of many protests. In this area our responsiveness needs to be jerked up seriously – many protestors indicate that their protests were in fact the last resort having told leadership many times before without success.

It is a telling indictment on us that the violent protests in Sakhile in Standerton in Mpumalanga province were said by spokespeople of protestors to have occurred after they had reported the allegations of corruption and maladministration to the provincial leadership without positive response.

The greed among some of us is driven by what the ANC discussion paper on "The ANC as an agent for change" described as the corrupting capitalist ethos and as a danger confronting the movement. The African Communist of the second quarter of 2000 quotes the paper with approval when it warned of the following:

- The danger of social distance creeping into the relationship between leading ANC comrades in new positions of power and our mass constituency; and
- The potentially corrupting influence of the prevailing capitalist ethos on our own cadres. ●

*Cde Tsenoli is a member of the SACP Central Committee and Governance Parliamentary Committee Chair*

## SERVICE DELIVERY PROTESTS

# The working class must not be neutralised in these tough times

*Don't be fooled by capital's propaganda: mass action can only strengthen the Zuma presidency, writes Cde Matankana Mothapo*

Recently, what analysts call service delivery protests have occurred throughout the country. Whether these have increased in frequency since the election of Jacob Zuma as president is questionable. The conditions sparking the protests have been present in working class areas for many years and it is possible that the media regards the current protests as worthy of reportage.

Some analyses of these protests reflect antagonistic class forces trying to distract attention from the brutality of the capitalist system. In doing so, some of this analysis goes as far as arguing that subjective factors such as Zuma's leadership and the 'unrealistic promises' that were made to the people during elections are largely responsible for the mass action.

The flip-side of this ideological onslaught is that much as the admission is made that 'times are tough' for the working class, the working class must nonetheless 'hold its tongue until the winds of discomfort have whirled to calm'. Linked to this is the assertion that the working class is weakening the Zuma administration through its class actions.

Dealing with these arguments, in turn, will enable us to get to the root of this.

Firstly, the argument about weakening of the Zuma government is feeble in the sense that it is the working class vote that guaranteed the decisive victory of the ANC under Jacob Zuma. Secondly, it was working class organisations such as Cosatu, followed by the YCL, which argued for a second term for a Zuma presidency



**Matankana Mothapo**

There are arguments that it is too early for the issue of succession to be raised in this current conjuncture because of trepidation of division. As long as they are healthy, I don't find any problem with a battle of ideas because they these ideas are revolutionary in terms of us building one another.

Thus quite contrary to what the analysts suggest, the Zuma government can only deliver in these tough times if it is buttressed by the might of an organised and militant working class in the work-

**Ending these actions meaning changing our system – the needs of the people, not business, must dictate who gets what**

places and the communities. The militancy of the working class and the poor is thus a source of strength that can be used by the incumbent government. It is the only weapon that this class against a bourgeoisie desperate to fashion the current period in its favour. Those who are lucky enough to find employment can show their discontent through withholding their labour power as was done by municipal workers in recent strikes.

Those forming the reserve army of the unemployed cannot exercise such leverage on capital. It is no wonder that the youth and women in the townships and rural areas are at the forefront of these service delivery protests.

Further, it would be disastrous for the poor to remain silent and limit their demands during the current period as the capitalist class is trying, in all manner of ways, to tilt the current economic environment to restore or maximise profitability. This, as history teaches us, can be done at the expense and brutalisation of the working class and the poor.

Lashing out at the poor will not solve the problems of lack of access to piped water in our communities due to aggressive commodification. It will not solve the reality of daily electricity cuts due simply because working class areas are seen as not lucrative for making money out of selling power. It will not resolve the problem of poor roads and infrastructure. It will not also resolve lack of proper houses in our villages and locations.

The current government must realise that transcending these mass actions demands at the same time a transcendence from the way in which the South African economy is organised. It demands that the needs of the people, as opposed to business, must dictate who gets what, when and how.

Above all, these protests have exposed the nature of the state's repressive machinery and how this is used to suppress the poor in this country. We have seen how the might of rubber bullets and tear-gas is dispensed on protesting crowds. The police and the army are usually called in by the state (even if it's democratic) to reel in popular uprisings and discontent. The efforts to send task teams to hot spots is indeed a commendable departure from the over reliance on the state's repressive machinery to solve problems. ●

*Cde Mothapo is SACP Media Liaison Officer*

## SACP LEADERSHIP

# Meet the Party's new deputy chair: Cde Joyce Moloji-Moropa

*Party activist, ANC NEC member, MP, Portfolio Committee chair, post-graduate student – and mother!*

Newly elected Deputy Chairperson of the SACP, Joyce Moloji-Moropa, joined the Party in 1991 as a student activist at Turfloop University. “It was sort of natural to join the Party. I was active in Sasco (South African Students’ Congress), and reading a lot about Marxism, and when I was approached to join, I did so without hesitation”.

She was the Sasco Provincial Gender Officer in Limpopo from 1990 to 1993 and the Sasco Provincial Chairperson from 1993 to 1995. She chaired an ANC branch in Polokwane in 1996-97. She was elected to the SACP Limpopo PEC in 1997 and to the Central Committee in 1999. Cde Joyce was elected to the Politburo soon thereafter. At the ANC Polokwane Conference in December 2007, she was elected to the ANC NEC.

Cde Joyce was politically active from the age of 13, was repeatedly detained and ultimately expelled from school. She left Soweto and was admitted at Marobathotha High School in Limpopo where she finished her secondary education.

Cde Joyce was unanimously elected Deputy Chairperson of the Party at the August Central Committee meeting. She replaces Cde Ncumisa Kondlo, who, sadly, died last year. She said she that while she was very sad to be elected in these circumstances (she and Cde Ncumisa were quite close), she was very honoured to be elected and was determined to do the best she can.

“I would like to see the programmes of the Party implemented more effectively,”



**SACP Deputy Chair: Cde Joyce Moloji-Moropa**

she said. “The branches are important in this, but I think the Districts must do much more. The districts are under-utilised. We need far more vibrant districts.”

She said that she sees part of her role as reducing the gap between the urban and rural areas. She was quick to stress though that she did not want to be pigeon-holed as a gender activist in the Party, even if that is an important part of her work. “Anyway, we have to link the gender struggle with the class and national struggles.”

Cde Joyce served in Parliament between 2001 and 2004, and returned to Parliament last year. She chairs the Pub-

lic Service and Administration Portfolio Committee in the National Assembly. She said that the large number of women MPs in the legislatures is important, “but it will not mean a lot if we don’t advance the position of women generally. We must reduce the gap between us and women generally”. She also feels that gender issues should be incorporated more into the Party’s Medium Term Vision and its programmes and policies.

She said she sees her parliamentary and SACP roles as “complementary”.

“It’s part of strategy to advance a developmental state. The role of SACP members who are in local government is very important. We have big challenges there. And that’s where service delivery is mainly taking place. There’s a lot that we can do to advance development through being public representatives, and linking this not just to our SACP work, but ANC work too.”

Cde Joyce has a BA Honours Degree and a Higher Education Diploma. She is currently doing a Micro-Economics Post-Graduate Diploma by correspondence through the University of London.

The lively, feisty mother of five children is married to Mathabathe Moropa, the secretary to the Mpumalanga legislature. They have two home bases – in Midrand and Nelspruit. And, of course, as an MP she also has a base in Cape Town.

Isn’t this very challenging for family life? “Yes, but you have to find a balance. Families are also important in the revolution.”

AFRICAN COMMUNIST

# 50 writing years! AC turns 50!

*Launched in apartheid's darkest days, AC survives to offer perspectives in the democratic era*

The African Communist turns 50 this month! The first issue was launched in October 1959. To celebrate the AC's 50th Anniversary, the Party is to have a seminar, 50 Writing and Fighting Years, in Johannesburg on 26 October. The ANC President, Cde Jacob Zuma, Cosatu General Secretary, Cde Zwelinzima Vavi, and SACP General Secretary, Cde Blade Nzimande will be key speakers.

Other speakers include Cdes Joe Matthews, Ronnie Kasrils, Eric Mtshali, Pallo Jordan, Dipuo Mvelazi, Jeremy Cronin, Joyce Moloi, Yunus Carrim, Buti Manamela and David Niddrie. Professor Ari Sitas will speak on 'the SACP and Alternative Media in South Africa'. There might also be other speakers at the Seminar.

There will also be a Special 50th Anniversary issue of the AC to coincide with the debate. The speakers at the seminar will contribute articles, as will others such as Cdes Ben Turok, Essop Pahad, Max Sisulu and Ben Martins. Others are still being approached to contribute.

An article by Cde Kasrils in the AC anniversary edition notes: "The first issue of the *African Communist* proclaimed: 'Africa needs Communist thought, as dry and thirsty soil needs rain.' For thirty years, working in dangerous and difficult con-



Legal AC: Recent editions of the publication

ditions, the underground South African Communist Party (SACP) and its cadres outwitted the apartheid security forces to get the message to our embattled people."

He notes further that "the first issue of the AC was produced at a dramatic time when apartheid and colonial racism ruled throughout the Southern African region; our continent was emerging from the shackles of colonial bondage; the socialist world appeared to be in the ascendancy over international capitalism. That inaugural 1959 edition (endnote 6) reflected the extraordinary shifts in the world balance of power, and carried the rousing declaration: 'Communism has become the vital social and political belief of our times. Already one-third of mankind has chosen the road to socialism under the leading banners of the Marxist parties. Everywhere else, millions of men and women press forward to their own liberation, inspired by the parties of Communism.'

'In this, as in so much else, Africa lags behind the world. The forces of imperialism, which have made Africa the dark

**"... to defend and spread the inspiring and liberating ideas of communism in our great continent"**

— AC, No 1, Vol 1

continent, have also kept the people curtailed off from the liberating spirit of Communism.

'This magazine, the *African Communist*, has been started by a group of Marxist-Leninists in Africa, to defend and spread the inspiring and liberating ideas of Communism in our great Continent, and to apply the brilliant scientific method of Marxism to the solution of its problems.

'It is being produced in conditions of great difficulty and danger. Nevertheless we mean to go on publishing it ...

'To you the reader, we say, comrade and fellow-worker, wherever you may be, read and study this magazine. Pass it on to fellow-workers and form groups to discuss it. These groups may become the foundation stones of great and important Communist Parties in many lands that will bring salvation to your country.'

"That clarion call showed that the AC was not simply meant to be an analytical journal but its purpose was to unite theory with practice and act as an organising vehicle for communists and revolutionaries throughout Africa."

The AC has come a long way since its first issue as has the SACP and the entire liberation movement. But the AC remains necessary to consolidate and advance the national democratic revolution and create the conditions for socialism. The Seminar will also be directed at reviewing the recent past of the AC and consider ways of strengthening the AC and the media of the entire liberation movement. ●

## PUBLIC OWNERSHIP

# Defend – and transform – the parastatal sector

*Forget profit maximisation – we must work to a longer-term strategic, developmental agenda*

By Jeremy Cronin

We are living in the midst of a major global crisis that is shaking the foundations of the world economy. The delusions that drove the global markets have plunged the world into this mess. Hundreds of millions of workers have lost jobs and factories have closed. Billions of dollars of retirement savings have simply evaporated into thin air. Hundreds of thousands of homes have been repossessed – all as a consequence of a global capitalist accumulation path that imagined it could forever defy gravity.

This delusion was audited and pronounced fit by all the big corporate names in accountancy and consulting – the Arthur Andersens, Pricewaterhouse Coopers, KPMGs.

It was given the stamp of approval and triple-A investment ratings by the venerable Fitches and Standard & Poors.

At such a time, you might think that there'd be a moment's pause for thought among our mainstream financial and economic commentators. You might think that they would ask themselves: Do we not need to evaluate some of our former assumptions?

Sadly, there is little evidence of this kind of introspection. One area in which this lack of self examination is evident is in commentary about SA's parastatal sector. The Business Day, for instance, recently ran a front-page article lamenting the fact that our major state owned enterprises (SOEs) have a more generous deadline (six months after the end of the financial year) for publishing their annual

financial statements than private companies listed on the JSE. Private shareholders would never tolerate this kind of delay, we were told. Is this really the big issue of our epoch?

It is true that there are challenges, some of them serious, in many of our SOEs and other parastatals. But before we deal with these, let us remind ourselves that South Africa's second quarter GDP statistics released in August underlined one important fact. While our economy continues to be in decline, there is one major sector that has continued to show some growth and therefore job retention and even job creation – and that is construction. Growth in this sector has everything to do with our state-led R787-billion infrastructure programme. And among the key drivers of this programme are our parastatals – among them Eskom, the Airports Company of SA (Acsa), Transnet, and the SA National Roads Agency (Sanral).

Indeed, as Minister of Finance, cde Pravin Gordhan, once more reminded us, our multi-year, R787-billion infrastructure programme is the core of our own, home-grown response to the global crisis and it is at the heart of our stimulus

**Government has a responsibility to impose a longer-term, public-interest discipline on SOEs**

package. The infrastructure programme was begun before the global crisis hit SA, but we are able to sustain it despite the recession and the consequent loss of significant tax revenues for two major SOE-related reasons:

- As the sole share-holder of key parastatals, government is able to place them under more than a simple market – (ie dividend maximising) – discipline. In particular, government can (or needs to) ensure that major SOEs have a longer-term strategic (developmental) agenda; and

- Because we have held on to major parastatals (in spite of earlier endeavours to sell most of them off), we have major corporations like Transnet or Acsa with significant assets and they are able to raise capital for infrastructure investments off-budget. This latter capacity is particularly important at a time when tax revenues are down (currently some R23bn below target according to Treasury).

Hilary Joffe of *Business Day* got, in my view, quite confused about parastatals in an article ("What if you take private out of enterprise?", 25 August). Joffe starts her article by generally agreeing with remarks I made at the recent release of the Airport Company's financial results. I said government expects state-owned enterprises to perform effectively in the market. But government also has a responsibility to impose a longer-term, public-interest, strategic discipline on SOEs.

Acsa, for instance, has been returning a healthy dividend to state coffers for several years. However, Acsa has now become one among several public entities driving government's multi-year infrastructure construction programme.

The major airport refurbishment and construction programme underway has required that Acsa borrow on the financial markets, its debt gearing is high. Despite an impressive increase in earnings for the past financial year, with debt servicing Acsa has not paid a dividend to government this time around. The foregone dividend is more than compensated for by Acsa's contribution to a number of national strategic priorities. Some of these have a relatively short-term deadline (the 2010 World Cup). Others require both immediate and longer term concerns, foremost among them job retention and creation.

While perhaps agreeing with much of this, Joffe believes she is in disagreement with me on other matters. "How many

state enterprises”, she asks, “really are the developmental entities with long-term vision Cronin has in mind?” It’s a legitimate question and sadly the answer is that many are not. But why? Is it because of an inherent flaw in public ownership, or because too often there is an uncritical imbibing of private sector practices in public entities?

Many of SAA’s current problems, for instance, date back to the once heralded former CEO Coleman Andrews. He introduced a gung ho private corporate culture of “unlocking share-holder value”, regardless of actual aviation performance (and in the process earned millions of rands in performance bonuses for himself). Andrews produced glowing earnings for SAA by selling off its fleet, and then...well yes, leasing it back – short-term hurrahs (before his contract ended), and a long-term mess which SAA is still battling to overcome.

And, as the SACP has noted on several occasions in the recent past, much the same applies to the economic challenges now facing Eskom. From the late 1990s a confusing set of signals were sent from government to key parastatals like Eskom. Essentially, there was a dominant drive to privatise these entities. The back-

log in investment in generation capacity, which is now such a major problem, dates back to that period.

Yes, not all is well with all SOEs. But regardless of ideology, the global recession everywhere is making private capital more dependent upon its national public sector – for bail-outs and rescue and stimulus packages. Given this, and granting that we have difficulties in some of our parastatals, surely we are confronting serious challenges?

The most obvious of which is strategic incoherence in the state, with all of the attendant risks of spending billions in a scatter-gun fashion on random vanity infrastructure projects, adding up to less than the sum of their unsustainable parts. Worse still, where there is public money and strategic incoherence you create a breeding ground for corruption

**SAA’s gung ho private corporate culture produced short-term hurrahs – and a long-term mess**

and collusion.

It is in this latter connection that we should salute and welcome the announcement by the Competitions Commission that it will be pressing ahead with an investigation against all of the major private construction companies in SA. With the new Competitions Act, allowing for criminal charges to be made against those involved in collusive activity, this investigation becomes even more significant.

With the imperative of continuing our state-led infrastructure spend, but with fiscal constraints, the discussion we need to be having is what are the sustainable and long-term priorities? Is it free-ways, or is it rail-lines? More refurbished airports, or bus stations? I’m not suggesting any of these is a simple either/or choice. I am insisting that intelligent choices have to be discussed and made. And an effective, strategically disciplined public sector will have to be fostered around such choices.

Let’s defend, but let’s also transform, our parastatal sector!

Asikhulume!!

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Cde Cronin is SACP Deputy General Secretary

## IN MEMORIAM

# Hamba Kahle, MaMabhida

**M**rs Mandulini Linah Smangele Mabhida, aged 85, well known as MaMabhida, the wife of the SACP late General Secretary, Cde Moses Mabhida, died on 26 September. She was an activist in her own right who counselled many young people.

MaMabhida was born on 12 July 1924 at Nkanyezi in Mkhambathini, where she grew up with her four sisters. She was a teacher, although she had no formal qualifications. She married Cde Moses Mabhida in 1949 and they had four children. She leaves behind seven grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

The SACP issued a statement expressing its regret at her passing away and noting: “This is one of the unsung heroines of our struggle who played a major sup-

porting role in shaping the revolutionary giant that our late General Secretary Cde Moses Mabhida was. The Mabhida family had to endure harassment by the notorious apartheid police security branch that for decades used to harass the family to, among other things, find out about the whereabouts of Cde Mabhida. MaMabhida had to endure this pain while at the same time having to protect and bring up the children, trying her best to ensure that they get a proper upbringing like any children.

“Despite all these and many other difficulties, she remained loyal and committed to her husband, whose mortal remains she received a few years ago from Mozambique for reburial in Pietermaritzburg.

“MaMabhida like many other women who were spouses to freedom fighters performed this kind of painful ‘unpaid labour’ all for the success of the revolution. She had also been blind for a long time before her passing away.

“We dip our revolutionary red banner in her honour and memory and pass our deepest condolences to family, relatives and friends.”

Her funeral in Msunduzi, Pietermaritzburg, was addressed by the SACP General Secretary, Cde Blade Nzimande, ANC Provincial Chair, Cde Zweli Mkhize, Cosatu representative, Cde Chris Ndlela, Sanco President, Cde Ruth Bhengu, ANC Women’s League President, Cde Angie Motshegka and others.

Hamba Kahle, MaMabhida

BRT

# Rea Vaya: the start of transport for the people!

*Cde Jeremy Cronin describes the success of the first steps towards safe, affordable bus rapid transport systems in four SA cities*

**A**t the beginning of September, the City of Johannesburg launched Rea Vaya – a BRT service from Soweto to the centre of the city. This is the very first phase of what will eventually be an expanded modern public transport network. Generally, community members were delighted to finally experience a modern, affordable and safe public transport service coming to Soweto. Not only was this a first for South Africa, it was also the first BRT in Africa.

But it hasn't been plain sailing. Over the past six months some sectors of the minibus industry have mounted campaigns against the "BRT". In some cities the lives of working class communities have been severely disrupted. Fortunately, following two national summits with the taxi organisations, outright opposition to the "BRT" seems to have faded – at least for the moment.

But what lies behind all these problems?

Despite a number of efforts since 1994, public transport has remained largely untransformed from the apartheid days. With the mass migration of people to cities, the pressures on our public transport have escalated.

What is more, apartheid spatial realities still persist. Most black working class communities are still located in distant dormitory townships. Our 3-million RDP houses have also tended to be delivered into peripheral locations.

Exhausting, often unsafe daily commuting remains the fate of millions of our people. Only one-third of households in SA have access to a car. All of this adds up to huge burdens in terms of time and money – and these are burdens placed overwhelmingly onto the backs of the poorest households in our country. Re-

cent surveys show that 30% of households spend more than 11% of their income on transport and 18% spend a staggering 20% and more.

Clearly, the solution is not just a transport response. Our cities, towns and rural areas must be transformed into spaces that provide better and safer access to work, study and leisure opportunities. But accessible and affordable public transport that is safe can have a catalysing role in re-shaping our cities and towns, making them more equitable and sustainable.

This is the general background against which four cities (Joburg, CT, PE and Tshwane) have begun to consider the introduction of BRT systems as ONE solution to the transformation of public transport and urban space.

BRT stands for Bus Rapid Transit. It is an innovative approach to public transport first pioneered in Brazil. It has since been adopted in more than 80 cities around the world – widely in Latin America, in Asia (including China) and also in first world countries like Australia, the US, and France.

A BRT system basically runs large buses on reserved road lanes with special stations. The bus floor is level with the platform, and passengers board and exit through wide doors. Fare collection occurs at the entrance to the bus station, which means that the buses stop very briefly at stations – much like a train. In

**BRT systems have significantly reduced 'taxi wars' in several Latin American cities**

fact, BRT systems are often described as "a train systems on rubber wheels running on dedicated road space".

BRT systems are often able to achieve passenger volumes, speeds and fuel efficiency (and therefore low fares) that are comparable to many commuter rail systems. The huge advantage that a BRT system has over rail is that its infrastructure can be infinitely less expensive than the construction (or extension) of a rail line.

While existing rail infrastructure is a major asset that should be safeguarded and used well, it is both expensive and there are long time lags for new construction. BRT is a much more flexible system.

In addition to these advantages, there is another critical factor that has influenced some of our cities in opting for BRT. We sometimes imagine "taxi wars" are unique to our country. Sadly (but consolingly), "taxi wars" have been an endemic feature of many Latin American cities. In several cities, where this violence has been rife, the introduction of BRT systems has helped to bring about a radical reduction of the problem.

Bogota in Colombia is an excellent example. The city had been plagued by violence among small bus operators, fanned by bus warlords who controlled the routes. The city built the BRT infrastructure and contracted with former small bus operators to run the buses. These private operators were required to formalise themselves into consortia in which the former war-lords and the former hand-to-mouth small operators became share-holders. Fare-collection is handled by a separate entity and profits are distributed weekly to the operators. To avoid overloading, speeding and fighting over passengers, the weekly payment



Passengers board one of the first Rea Vaya buses from Soweto to the Johannesburg CBD

is not based on passenger numbers, but rather on scheduled kilometres travelled according to contracted agreements. The former warring operators report that business is better than ever, and the insecurity of violence has disappeared. For the 1,5-million Bogotans who use the system every day, they now have safe, well-regulated, world-class public transport that takes them to the far corners of their mega-city... and the flat rate fare is just R2,70!

Why then are there protests against the BRT?

In a recent review of our challenges, the Department of Transport and the four cities involved in BRT projects have agreed that part of the problem lies with government.

We have not devoted sufficient energy and time to consulting with and informing a general public – not so much taxi operators (often a lot of consultation has happened with their leaderships) – but rather with workers in the sector and, critically, communities.

This weakness has created space for the spreading of disinformation. Some of this might be innocent insecurity, but at least some appears to be fanned by elements in the minibus sector trying to mobilise discontent in order to stake a slice of the action for themselves in future BRT operations.

In the months before the September launch of the Rea Vaya, the SACP in Gauteng, working with alliance partners, revitalised our Red October public transport campaign and convened public meetings in Soweto. This has played an important role in mobilising public support for Rea Vaya, but also in enabling the community to play a more active role in shaping the project.

As far as consultations with taxi operators is concerned it is important to understand how government is seeking to approach the matter. On the one hand, through a National Joint Working Group, there are broad engagements with the taxi industry on a range of topics affecting the taxi sector, including BRT. On the other hand, in the metros that are implementing BRT systems, the cities are negotiating with affected operators currently on routes that are to become BRT routes.

In this latter case, the negotiations will eventually lead to formal contracts between the cities and operators. An assurance has been given that there will be no

loss of legitimate business. Current minibus operators will have the opportunity to become owners of the BRT bus operating company. There is also an assurance that there will be no net reduction in jobs on these routes. In fact, there will be significant improvement in job security and working conditions for workers in the BRT system. Drivers will work shifts and receive training and benefits. Other employment will be provided in such things as station security and maintenance. However, if this is all to work, then we cannot allow operators who are not directly affected by the new BRT routes to barge in and claim a slice of action for themselves.

There should be improvements for affected operators and workers. But most important of all are the benefits to a travelling public sick of congested roads, uncomfortable journeys and high prices. Joburg's Phase 1A Rea Vaya BRT enables passengers to travel from Soweto through to Joburg CBD in air-conditioned comfort, in much less time than ever before, and for a price (R8,00) considerably less than current fares. This is a small but important beginning in democratising mobility and space in our towns and cities. ●

**The major benefit is to a travelling public sick of congested roads and uncomfortable journeys**

*Cde Cronin is SACP Deputy General Secretary and Deputy Minister of Transport*

## HIGHER EDUCATION

# The back – and front – doors of higher education

*Personal reflections by SACP general secretary Cde Blade Nzimande on the different perspectives gained from different entrances to our universities*

Over the last 30 years, I have visited almost all of South Africa's universities, and many of their satellite campuses – many of them more than once. Apart from the three university campuses where I taught, and three at which I studied, from the early 1980s my visits to South African universities have mostly been through the 'back' door, as it were – most often as a delegate to what are probably now scores of conferences of the NECC, trade unions, ANC and SACP congresses. In other instances I have visited these institutions as an invited speaker by university workers and students through their organisations.

I call these 'backdoor' visits because they would normally be over weekends, with the first entry point being the registration centres point for conferences or congresses, usually in a sports complex or multipurpose hall and then I would proceed to residences where delegates are housed. Often one never even sees the front of the institution nor gets any insights into its institutional life. I have had more experience of the university precinct as a site for intense political struggles and debates, lobbying for various political and policy positions, and campuses as places for taking important political decisions that have had far-reaching implications for the political direction of our country.

On 30 September 2009 I paid an official visit in my capacity as a government Minister to the University of the Free State. As I entered the university, through the 'front' door this time, I could not help but recall that it was at the same university, where the ANC held its first national conference after the 1994 democratic breakthrough, gathering for the first time as a ruling party. And that it was at the same university that Cde Nelson Man-



**SACP GS Blade Nzimande**

dela was re-elected for the second time as President of the ANC, with Cde Jacob Zuma elected National Chairperson of the ANC. Incidentally, it was at the same conference where I was elected onto the National Executive Committee of the ANC for the first time.

Being at the ANC conference and officially visiting the institutions were two very contrasting experiences of the same space. During the 'back' door many important decisions were taken that came to shape the character and direction of the ANC as a ruling party and indeed changed the course of our country. Yet debates taking place in conference commissions held at the various university lecture halls were not being adequately captured and reflected once these spaces return to their normal role as university lecture halls. The 'back' and the 'front' door is actually the same space!

During this 'front' door visit to the University of the Free State, three things

made a lasting impression on me. The first one was a black student leader's description of the university as "one campus, two races". Through this he took us through the language policy and practices of the institution, as he experienced them. Afrikaans and English lectures are offered at different times within the same university. When it is time for Afrikaans lectures the university lecture halls and their precincts are predominantly white, and then a radical change when it is time for English lectures; the same spaces becomes overwhelmingly black. This alone captures the extent of the complexity of the challenge for transformation at this institution.

I was humbled by the meeting I had with the four black women and one male black worker who were racially abused in that ugly incident at the university's Reitz hostel – a classic expression of the depth of the class, race and gender contradictions in our society.

Much as the 'scars' of that incident could be read from their tone, they refused to treat themselves as victims, and instead described their experience as a microcosm of the state of the campus as a whole. They asked for simple yet very telling things. They asked for the colour of their work overalls to be changed as they found them 'oppressive', a daily reminder of the Reitz episode. And they asked to be redeployed out of cleaning residences to other parts of the university, as they are still taunted by some of the white students.

Our delegation was also struck by the political depth and maturity of student leadership in that campus. It also, for the first time, has a black SRC president. Our reflection was that it is perhaps these difficult circumstances that bring out the



The 'front door' of OFS: (above) the university's main entrance, and (below) its central administration building

best from our youth. But at the same time I could not help but be saddened by the fact that much as we had thought that the struggles, sacrifices and victories of the 1976 generation had relieved today's university students from the burdens of race and racial discrimination, this unfortunately is still not yet the case. Ironically but not unexpectedly this burden was carried by both black and white students. Black students felt like second class citizens at the university and it was clear from the interactions with some of the white student leaders that they also carried the burden of the fear of racial integration of the hostels and the progressive transformation of the university. Indeed this is no surprise to the SACP as we had always consistently argued that the total liberation of black people is a necessary condition for liberating whites from fear of democratic transformation of our society.

These matters, captured by the Soudien report that probed racism and other forms of discrimination at universities, are a reflection of the broader challenges and the urgency to accelerate the transformation of South Africa's higher education landscape.

One of the double burdens that continue to face African students in most of the former Afrikaans universities is that of language. Not only do they sometimes get excluded because of their lack of knowledge of Afrikaans, but they also feel like 'language refugees' within some of these institutions. It is a double burden for African students because they are still taught in a second, often third or fourth language, English. It is time now that this issue of language policy in higher educa-



tion is dealt with once and for all. The SACP, especially our YCL, has an important role to play in tackling this matter as one of the barriers to both access and success in our higher education institutions. It is a struggle that cannot be postponed any further.

The disjuncture and lack of effective conversations between the 'back' and the 'front' doors of our higher education institutions is one other instance that underlines the necessity for curriculum transformation in our higher education institutions. The racist incidents in some of our universities are also a reflection of the variance between the often progressive aspirations of the 'back' door and the resistance of the mainstream 'front' door. It is a conflict and tension between, on the one hand, the aspirations of non-racialism, non-sexism and objectives of a

*The back doors are loud  
The front doors are shut  
Yet the front doors are also loud –  
racism, patriarchy and class elitism  
Backdoors not yet loud enough to  
break into the front doors  
As the backdoors open  
The front doors close shut  
As the front doors open  
The backdoors are half open  
Both doors walk into each other*

classless society of the 'back' door, and, on the other hand, the 'one campus, two races' of the 'front' door.

A key challenge which the SACP, YCL and the broader progressive movement need to tackle is the need for strong student and worker organisation on our campuses, including the building of vibrant institutional forums representing all stakeholders in our higher education institutions.

Such institutional forums are important in strengthening intra-campus dialogue on transformation and a critical platform to end the disjuncture between the 'back' and the 'front' doors in our institutions.

Asikhulumel!! ●

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Cde Nzimande is General Secretary of the SACP and Minister for Higher Education

YUSUF DADOO CENTENARY

# Celebrating the birth of a giant of our struggle

*Cde Omar Badsha charts a life given to the struggle against apartheid and to building unity among SA's democratic forces*

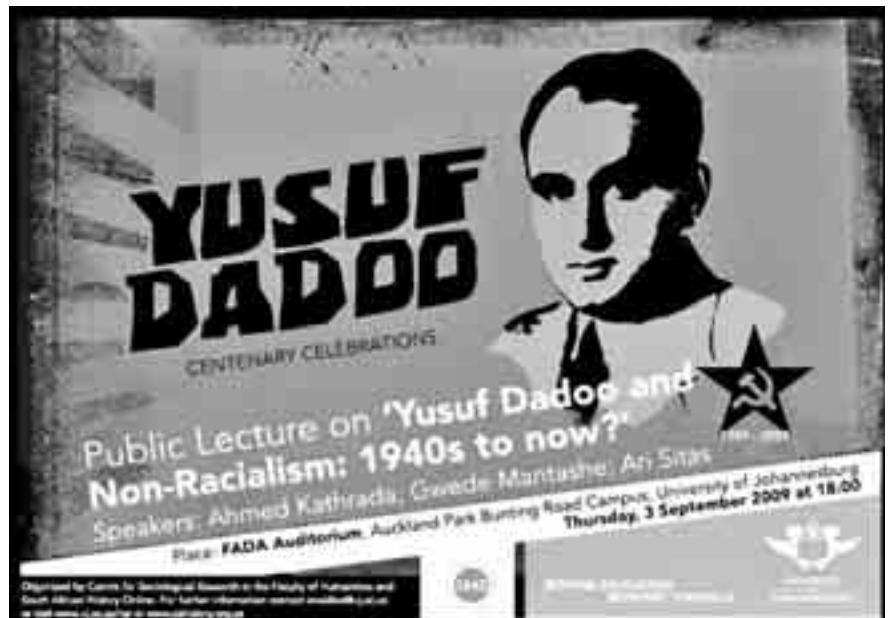
The celebration of Yusuf Dadoo's 100th birthday on 5 September came at a time when race issues within the ANC and among conservative groups within the new Black political elite are fuelling dangerous trends in public discourse within the country.

It is ironic but timely that the Cde Dadoo centenary celebrations allow us to use the life and times of one of the leading proponents of non-racialism to consider the state of the nation. Dadoo's life exemplified the enormous care and effort that he and generations of communists put into winning over the leadership of the fledgling ANC youth league in the late 1940s.

Cdes Dadoo, JB Marx, Moses Kotane, IC Meer, and Michel Harmel, not only through their patient arguments, but through their trade union activity, work among the Indian congresses, Non-European United Front (NEUF) and during the 1946 mine workers' strike and the passive resistance campaigns, helped to dispel the Youth League's reluctance to work with Communists and Indians.

Comrade Blade Nzimande, in his keynote address at the Dadoo Centenary conference on the anniversary of Dadoo's birthday, said that Dadoo did not belong to "any minority but belonged to a majority".

Dadoo's greatest contribution is the point that he made throughout his life, which was backed up by his example of being "at the forefront of nearly every major campaign since 1936" – that a Free South Africa would only truly arrive when one is not judged by race or colour but by the contribution one makes to the struggle of humanity to free itself from class and other forms of oppression.



Banner announcing the Yusuf Dadoo Centenary event

Dadoo's anniversary coincides with the 50th anniversary of the founding of the African Communist, a timely moment that underlines the fact that the formation of the SACP in 1953 was largely due to the efforts of Dadoo to ensure that the party did not wither away after it been declared illegal in 1950.

Who was Yusuf Dadoo and what was his contribution to the national liberation struggle, the movement for socialism in

Africa and the shaping of our new democracy?

Dr Yusuf Dadoo was the son of Mahomed Dadoo, an emigrant young Muslim who came from India to the old Transvaal Republic in 1896 as a 16-year-old boy seeking work. Dadoo's father became a very successful businessman who supported Gandhi's passive resistance campaign. The young Dadoo grew up against the backdrop of racial discrimination, the government policy of not recognising the right of Indians as citizens, and the use of law and administrative action to restrict their rights to reside, trade and move about freely.

His political education and empathy for the poor was deepened when he was sent to India to complete his high school education. He became aware of how the mi-

**He was, with Luthuli and Huddleston, the first recipient of the ANC's Isitwalandwe award**



**Defiance Campaign (from left): James Moroka, Nelson Mandela and Yusuf Dadoo**



**Dadoo during a brief moment of relaxation**

nority Muslim community was pitted against the Hindu communalists by the British in their effort to divide the Indian independence movement. Dadoo learned the importance of a strong multi-class and secular congress movement and saw how this policy could be a precursor of an independent secular India. But above all Dadoo learned the strategic importance of a committed leadership that was close to the masses, prepared to engage in passive resistance, mass mobilisation, and be ready to go to prison.

India transformed Dadoo into a militant Indian nationalist, but it was England that made him a Marxist and political activist. After completing high school, Dadoo went on to study medicine in Edinburgh. He found himself in the centre

of the British Empire in the grip of the great depression, and wracked by class struggle and poverty. He joined the India League and became active in the British Independent Labour party. In Edinburgh he immersed himself in Marxism and closely followed events in the fledgling Soviet Union.

Dadoo came back to South Africa a doctor in 1936 and, within two years, built a progressive caucus inside the conservative Transvaal Indian Congress with Ismail "Maulvi" Cachalia and TN Naidoo, both sons of Gandhi's most trusted passive resistance lieutenants.

In January 1939 he was recruited by Michael Harmel into the CPSA and became a member of its important Johannesburg Central branch. With the passing of the segregationist Servitude Scheme in January 1939, which would effectively remove Indians and coloureds from previously mixed areas, Dadoo was propelled onto the national scene.

Dadoo was present at the launch of the NEUF and was elected the Transvaal head of the new organisation. He found himself working fulltime, fighting on two fronts: building the NEUF, and mobilising the Indian community to throw out the conservative leadership of the TIC and mounting a passive resistance campaign against a new law directed at the Indian community.

By the end of the decade he had grown in stature as a national leader. Through his work in the party and as the joint head of the 1946/1947 passive resistance campaign with Dr Naicker, Dadoo be-

came the most recognised public figure nationally and internationally. He was charged and imprisoned more times than any other leader in that decade.

Dadoo, by the dint of his personality, selfless sacrificing nature and leadership qualities, secured the support of the Indian community for joint action with the African and coloured people and progressive whites. He laid the basis not just for the creation of the Congress Alliance – a long held dream of his for the establishment of a national movement that cut across class and race – but forged in the joint struggles a new South African identity among the Indian people. Dadoo's contribution as an African leader was recognised when the ANC made him, Chief Albert Luthuli and Father Trevor Huddleston the first recipients of the Isitwalandwe award.

Dadoo's greatest attribute was that he never gave up – this was the quality that compelled him to join with other members of the banned CPSA to reconstitute itself in 1953 as the underground SACP, of which he was chairperson and Kotane the general secretary.

Dadoo's most important contribution to the liberation struggle came when the ANC and PAC were banned and he was sent out with Oliver Tambo to lobby for international support for the liberation movement and the isolation of South Africa.

In the next 23 years until his death in 1983, Dadoo and Tambo, managed to build one of the greatest movements of international solidarity in support of the liberation movement and which successfully made racism and apartheid an international crime.

Dadoo was the driving force in keeping the Party alive in exile, and he helped build a fighting alliance with the ANC. Dadoo's dream of a non-racial ANC as the precursor of a free non-racial South Africa was achieved when the ANC opened its membership to non-Africans at the Morogoro Conference in 1969. Dadoo was elected as deputy to Tambo, of the ANC's new revolutionary council.

There is still a definitive biography that needs to be written on Dadoo the man and his contribution to the liberation struggle. South African History Online has compiled a comprehensive archive on Dadoo on its website. Visit [www.sahistory.org.za](http://www.sahistory.org.za)

*Cde Badsha is a former trade unionist and veteran activist*

## NON-RACIALISM

# Why all this sudden talk of 'minorities'?

*The ANC has a proud history of non-racialism – now is not the time to attack comrades who stood bravely against the Class Project, writes Cde Sikhumbuzo Thomo*

I read the statement by the ANC YL President on “minorities” in the economic Ministries with a sinking feeling as it reminds me of one old man, Xuma, who after having lost a re-election in the ANC, went on to attack the Alliance and the white leadership we had at the time.

It is a complete misrepresentation and a distortion of historical facts. In Morogoro, for instance, part of the reason – in fact the resolution that led to the establishment of the Revolutionary Council – was to counteract these tendencies. The African Question was resolved in the ANC, hence the election of the then Chief of Staff comrade Joe Slovo to the NEC. Later came cde Jeremy Cronin, who currently is the longest serving “white comrade” in the ANC NEC.

I think we need to familiarise ourselves with the history of our movement, in particular the Kabwe Conference resolutions. Cdes Zwelidinga and Mzala wrote at length on this. Now that is a historical fact.

Another fact is that the African National Congress is a true non-racial formation. Yes, the NDR talks to the transformation of African in particular but it does not say we should sideline minorities! If rank were to be pulled I can tell that we had outstanding white revolutionaries who went all the way, when the apartheid racial line would have landed them in safer places they chose differently.

And this thing of calling fellow South

Africans a minority: are they not equal South Africans? What of the Indian, English, and so on, born South Africans? What about the question of the role of whites in the NLM? What about the fundamental role the Natal Indian Congress and the Transvaal Indian Congress played in the underground structures? Interestingly, today when all is rosy, the historical composition of our Congress Alliance is narrowly and chauvinistically defined like Xuma defined it!

I agree that one must first crawl before one can walk and the process of political education is a very long and tedious process without shortcuts. As a result one can confuse nationalisation with socialisation of the means of production or worse still with “Public Ownership”. The general ideological outlook of any society is not primarily defined as to who owns the means of production as some cut and paste, popcorn or lucky packet ideologues would want us to believe but the economic forms of production and the

**Before we criticise,  
we must ask:  
Are we equal to the task  
they're undertaking?**

mode contribute to ideology. We must understand the nature of socialist public ownership and opposed to this disguised call for capitalist public ownership! Why is there no definition of who should nationalise?

And immediately a concern as to who leads the economic cluster? This leaves much to be desired and, as a matter of fact, as revolutionaries and comrades this is a theoretical debate that if not properly engaged with could sink the very National Democratic Revolution that as comrades we should be taking to a higher plane without building a Chinese wall between ourselves.

What I do not want to imagine is that this sentiment is a confession of the reminiscences of the non-communist element within the Alliance that was defeated in Polokwane. Forces that were saying that “now is their time to eat and amass wealth”, comrades who sang the same songs with the working class and raised cde JZ to lead but for all the wrong and selfish reasons!

Last but not least, if there is anyone better placed to respond to the challenge of non-racialism it is the General Secretary of the South African Communist Party as the SACP was the first organisation that practiced non-racialism – long before the ANC! And that with recognition of African leadership cde JS did step down as the Chief of Staff of the Peoples Army to hand the reigns to cde Hani and so too cde Cronin, a selfless revolutionary who was absolved by history when the likes of the late Dumisani Makhaye had the same sentiments not too many years ago!

Cde Cronin stood up against all odds, when nobody dared, against the 1996 class project that sought the Zanufication of the ANC. Luckily that class project was mostly destroyed in Polokwane! Why now are we told whites cannot lead by those who at the time in the political sunshine were silent on the role of white comrades and the later vilification of President JZ! These are historical facts. No amount of screaming and use of English can distort the invaluable contribution made by these comrades.

Let's move away from the politics of the quantity disguised in the NDR to politics of quality as well as asking ourselves – especially those among us who are clearly greedy: “Am I equal to that task?” ●

*Cde Thomo is a member of the YCL National Committee*

## NATIONALISATION AND THE CHARTER

# Implement the freedom Charter, stop distorting it

*And while we're at it, don't forget the 'banks and monopoly industry', writes Cde Pat Makape*

The call made by the ANCYL President to 'transfer the mineral wealth, the Banks and monopoly industry to the ownership of the people as a whole', in line with the Freedom Charter, has sparked a welcome debate.

Interestingly, instead of discussing mines, the banks and monopoly industry, the debate has been hijacked and reduced to nationalisation of mines only.

The hijackers distort and vulgarise to imply that the Freedom Charter is just about the transfer of the mineral wealth to a small black elite, and they seek to protect white elite mining interests.

It is public knowledge that both the Minister of Mines and the Deputy Minister of Public Enterprises have come out in support of the mining bosses and the black elite. For instance, the Minister of Mines argues that the current legislation signifies the nationalisation of the mines in line with the Freedom Charter.

Echoing the Minister of Mines's diatribe, the Deputy Minister of Public Enterprises said he did not understand what further nationalisation was required beyond the state's ownership of mineral rights and its prerogative to grant exploration and mining rights. This is a downright vulgarisation and distortion of the Freedom Charter. If indeed the state ownership of mineral rights is equivalent to state ownership of mines how come none of the mines are listed as state-owned enterprises (except for Alexkor)?

The Minister of Mines is quoted in the media as having said "It's something that impacts on them [mining houses] directly. They raised concerns. But those we have interacted with, we have assured them to say this is not government policy."

This is precisely what is wrong with the



**Property of the people – courtesy of the Charter**

mining industry, where a Minister deployed by the ANC acts very swiftly to assure business but the very same Minister has never found it necessary to publicly say that she has assured workers (who are regularly killed in unsafe mines) and communities who are oppressed and exploited by mines. It is hardly surprising that communities are up in arms as the ministry consistently sides with mine bosses.

The DG of the Department of Mines tells the media "I have been saying to them that this instrument (the Mining Charter) must be made to succeed because if it doesn't, the people of South Africa might ... end up calling for radical solutions – and this is what is now happening."

**The Mining Charter is an instrument of a small black elite, not of the masses of the people**

When the people of South Africa convened in Kliptown, they never said that the transfer of mineral wealth beneath the soil was dependent on whether the Mining Charter succeeds or not. The Mining Charter is not an instrument to transfer the mineral wealth beneath the soil to the ownership of the people as a whole, but on the contrary, it has been successfully used to transfer the ownership to an elite few, whose interests are diametrically opposed to the interests of the people.

The media also reports that black investors warmed up to conditional nationalisation, saying that, "while they believe blanket nationalisation will not work, they are of the view that greater state involvement is required to achieve meaningful transformation and achieve developmental goals".

It is worth noting that the current global capitalist crisis has hit the mining industry the hardest (the industry has contracted by 32% and share prices halved), collapsing BEE deals in its wake. It is within this context that we must understand their call for conditional nationalisation. The black elite wants the state to continue transferring the mineral wealth beneath the soil from the white elite to themselves, not to the ownership of the people as a whole as demanded by the Freedom Charter.

The Freedom Charter has stood the test of time because it captures the essence of the ideal society we want to construct.

We will expose those who distort and vulgarise the Freedom Charter lest our revolutionary gains are reversed. ●

*Cde Makape is YCL Limpopo Provincial Secretary*

## INTERNATIONAL

# SACP at international seminar in Belgium

*Cde Chris Matlhako returns from Belgium committed to strengthening SACP ties with the Workers' Party ((PTB/PVDA)*

The Workers' Party of Belgium (PTB/PVDA) has over the last few years consistently invited the SACP to take part in its International Communist Seminar (ICS) held in Brussels, which has become an annual calendar event for progressive parties across the globe.

The SACP was invited to be a part of the annual summer Marxist University and to present at the Forum a paper on "The crisis of class struggles in Africa". It was also an opportunity to foster closer ties and exchanges with a Party that has historically developed a progressive class analysis of developments in the DRC, due to former colonial ties between Belgium and the DRC.

Primarily, the visit was to forge greater ties and fraternal relations for purposes of regular exchanges which would assist the SACP to better comprehend the developments in the French-speaking, former colony of the DRC in particular, but generally to assess progressive perspectives on the on events in the EU and its impact on Africa.

Various engagements were arranged and we met the national leadership of the PTB/PVDA, including its president cde Peter Mertens, who suggested that the SACP and the PTB/PVDA should strengthen our ties because of our responsibilities in Africa.

Such engagement will be critical in respect of the work of the Africa Left Network (ALNEF) – and there was general agreement to attempt to support this work to advance progressive perspectives on the continent.

A meeting with the international department of PTB/PVDA also resolved to explore assistance for the work of ALNEF, because of its importance in advancing a left project on the continent.

We were also allowed to observe the "Medicines for The People Programme" – which started in the early 1970s and led to the formation of the PTB/PVDA.

This programme, which is underpinned by a welfare system involving comprehensive health cover for all Belgians since the late 19th century), has made it possible for the PTB/PVDA, to provide free primary healthcare at medical centres in working class neighbourhoods, which are close to former mining towns with their prevalence of mining-related diseases.

The state pays for consultations at these medical centres. This programme has also been developed into the Third World Medical Programme, which is successfully implemented in the Philippines and other Latin American countries and includes a partnership with Cuba.

We visited these centres in Mollenbeek in Brussels and Hoboken in Antwerp. Both are poor, working class communities and have concentrations of North African, Turkish and former eastern European immigrant populations.

The focus of the programme on primary healthcare made it valuable in the light of South Africa's own huge challenges of healthcare provision.

Our interest in the programme was in how we could use the increasing number of Cuban-trained South African students in a similar model, retain most of the trained medical corps in the primary healthcare system and inspire them to work in disadvantaged areas.

We suggest that the Friends of Cuba Society (FOCUS-SA) explores this, possibly working together with the PTB/PVDA Medicines For the People Programme.

The Marxist University is an annual event held over two semesters – winter

and summer. This is a mechanism to ensure development of political consciousness and revolutionary theory among the membership of the PTB/PVDA and allied organisations. The university is also open to others who share the perspective of a left revolution in Belgium and Europe.

The focus of the Marxist University this year was Africa and class struggles on the African continent. The Party made a presentation about the 88 years of unbroken struggles in South Africa. There was huge interest, in particular in Party's perspectives about the new, 'perceived contradiction' of being in government and also maintaining an independent stance.

These lectures were followed by presentations from leading figures in Belgian's Left, such as Collett Brackman, who is regarded as an independent leading analyst on the DRC. She presented a discussion on the new challenges of the DRC and its relationship with the People's Republic of China

A colourful figure was cde Mohamed Hassan – a leading expert on the Horn of Africa and politics of USA destabilisation in there. He looked at the issue of pirates and the importance of the Indian Ocean.

We also had the opportunity to visit Antwerp and observed the implications for the working class and labour of the commercialisation of port-related activities which had supported much of the economic activities of Antwerp.

Some issues we need to follow up on are:

- The SACP should follow up on the pledge to assist with aspects relating to the work of the Africa Left Network Forum (ALNEF), including diversifying the languages used on the website of ALNEF,

- The Party to forge close ties with the PTB/PVDA and use its capacities to enhance our own understanding and analyses of the French-speaking countries on the continent, the DRC in particular,

- The Party to suggest FOCUS-SA explores the "Medicines For The People Programme" and seeks to apply its framework to SA

- Support regular exchanges between PTB/PVDA and the SACP,

- Develop joint political education around gender and related matters,

- Prioritise the annual International Communist Seminar (ICS) ●

*Cde Matlhako is a member of the SACP PolitBuro*

## REGIONAL REPORTS

## Mpumalanga Provincial Congress

## Statement by newly elected Mpumalanga SACP leadership

ABOUT 450 delegates attended the 7th SACP Mpumalanga Provincial Congress from 17 to 19 September. The following resolutions were adopted:

**On building hegemony of the Communist Party ideology**

Continue and recruit members and establish branches in all the 1256 voting districts in Mpumalanga and ensure that they are appropriately prepared to lead the struggle for socialism using the appropriate Marxist-Leninist tools.

Capacitate members to guide communities to find informed solutions to challenges they face and defend them from the greedy, power hungry self-serving opportunists, who have made it their career to chase public offices for their own selfish interest sake.

The struggle for socialism is more relevant than ever. The current global crisis is a proof that capitalism has failed humanity. It is not just an accident of history but an integral part of the natural capitalist systems, anchored in production and the dual character of accumulation and its inequalities.

**On the economic front**

Defend the interest of the working class through working with all our people to develop strategies in line with the NED-LAC Framework Agreement to mitigate the negative impact of the current global crisis on the working class and poor.

Work with government to ensure that the economic opportunities of the province are exploited to the benefit of the working class and the poor, as well as ensuring that they become a catalyst for the development and growth of the SMME's and the cooperatives.

Advocate for local procurement, as a critical intervention in local economic development and job creation.

Participate in the processes of developing a rural development strategy by government and welcome the new focus by government on Rural Development

Re-iterate our call for the nationaliza-

tion of SASOL, mines and all agricultural land.

**Women and economy**

Campaign for the transformation of the economic space and ensure that more women are given opportunities to participate fully in the economy and all sites of our society. The participation of women in the economy is very critical given the patriarchal nature of society.

Swell the ranks of the women's movement in the province and ensure we provide leadership to provide a platform for advancing our Medium Term Vision.

**On education and training**

Support the call for the establishment of an Mpumalanga University, the repositioning of the FET's to meet the skills needs within our province and call on companies to resuscitate apprenticeship. Call on government to intensify the establishment of Early Childhood Development Centers and increase "no-fees" schools in both primary and secondary spheres, while ensuring that infrastructure and learner support materials are effectively in place. Free Education until tertiary level remains our long term goal.

**On the State and deployed communists**

Reaffirm our stance that communists deployed into strategic positions should not be absorbed by the comforts of state positions as MPs, MPLs, MECs or Ministers but must remain leaders of the working class.

Reject the tendency to want to create separate laws governing communists in the government and those for the rest. It is in this breath we condemn unequivocally the blaming of the General Secretary of the SACP, Blade Nzimande for not having stopped the state from buying a ministerial car they deemed suitable to cater for the security standards of any Minister. Such matters are regulated. We did not send comrades to government to defy the laws of the country, but to advocate for their change if they are irregular and not serving the interest of the working class and the poor. We believe that the issue of Ministerial service standards is a matter that requires attention in the review of the Ministerial Handbook.

**On anti-communist tendencies**

We warn those who have decided to subscribe to the new tendencies of being anti-communist that, like we did to the 1996 class project, we shall unleash the might of the working class to defend the working class leadership and socialist ori-

ented National Democratic Revolution against the new tendencies.

We shall stand by our leaders, including the General Secretary and YCL National Secretary against the continued petty attacks by the capitalists. For this we say "hands off" our General Secretary and the YCL National Secretary.

**On community and community concerns**

Unite the Mass Democratic Movement to find a solution to the current spate of community protests, which in most cases tend to be violent in nature. While we condemn violence, we believe the current crisis of service delivery protests is a reflection of the deep-seated challenges of poor leadership, corruption, the apartheid geography and poor inter governmental co-ordination.

To prepare for 2011 local government elections so that we can defeat and replace the power of money (that is beginning the rear its ugly head) during the nomination processes with people's power.

Affirm that decisions on demarcation are made democratically. The Moutse matter therefore calls for immediate intervention on the part of government by considering the views of the people of Moutse.

**On the internal front**

We are very disturbed by the ongoing oppression, torture and harassment of the leaders and people of Swaziland in their quest for democracy. We commit ourselves to intensify our solidarity work with the people of Swaziland and we call on our government to cut ties with the undemocratic tinkundla system. We also call for the immediate unconditional release of all arrested comrades, including the President of Pudemo, Cde Mario Masuku.

**Congress elected leadership**

Congress unanimously elected the following comrades to the Provincial Executive Committee:

Bonakele Majuba (Provincial Secretary)  
Eric Kholwane (Chairperson)  
Fisani Shabangu (Treasurer)  
Adrian Williams (Deputy Secretary)  
Solly Mnguni (Deputy Chairperson)  
Dikgale Lesetja, Lubisi William, Madonsela Bethabile, Maseko Qondi, Masuta Justice, Marobela Moses, Mbuyane lucky, Mlombo Fidel, Morema Milton, Nkambule Vusi, Nxumalo Patience, Sibiyi Godfrey, Sikhonde Busi, Siwela Violet, Theledi TK

## North West SACP PC Lively North West Provincial Council

By MADODA SAMBATHA

144 DELEGATES attended the North West SACP Provincial Council (PC) meeting in Klerksdorp on 19 September.

A major issue was the implications of the dissolution of the ANC PEC. The PC felt that the ANC NEC deployees to the province should have briefed the Alliance in the province about the dissolution of the ANC PEC and the role of the Provincial Task Team (PTT). While welcoming the appointment of the PTT, the PC expressed concern that Alliance partners were not being consulted by the PTT on deployment and other decisions.

However, the PC pledged to assist the

PTT with its tasks of the organisational renewal of the ANC. The PC cautioned about the re-emergence of factions that might derail the tasks of the PTT. The PC decided that Party members should assist this ANC process.

The PC noted the tendency within the liberation movement and media to attack Communists. But this is not surprising as Communists are the most consistent opponents of the capitalist system. However, there is an increasing tendency to present the SACP as factionalist and wanting to take over the ANC. This is the case though SACP members contest positions and ideas in the ANC in their own right as ANC members and activists. The PC felt that the attacks on the ANC SG, Cde Gwede Mantashe, must also be seen in this light. They are really attacks on the SACP Chairperson. This Communist-baiting is also to be seen in the constant

debates about where power is in the ANC and who is controlling the ANC. It is also asked is Cde Zuma in charge? The SACP GS, Cde Blade Nzimande, is also attacked. He is sometimes attacked in his capacity as a Minister. But the attack is really on the SACP.

The membership in the province has grown from 2 500 at our March 2007 Provincial Congress to 6 280 at present. However, the PC noted that many old members were not renewing their membership. The PC felt that the SACP in the province should actively reach out to members whose membership has lapsed. The constitutional provision on a year's probation and the ideological development of new members needs to be adhered to. ●

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*Cde Sambatha is North West SACP  
Provincial Secretary*

## LABOUR BROKING

# Ban it now – it's no more than slavery!

*Cde Madoda Sambatha argues labour brokers are little more than parasites*

**T**he debate on the Labour Brokers is about more than purely a ban or regulation. The working class would argue against labour broking on the grounds that its contractual basis is exploitative. Capitalists and the aspirant bourgeoisie would argue from the basis of income generated through selling labour power they do not own.

All those arguing for the regulation of labour broking and criticising Cosatu for calling for it to be banned are being economical with the truth. Those in favour of labour brokers being regulated claim they create jobs. On the contrary, they merely act as intermediaries to access jobs that already exist, and which in many cases would have existed previously as permanent full time jobs.

The replacement of permanent jobs through labour broking arrangements or other equally insecure forms of atypical

employment effectively displaces and destroys decent jobs because of the insecure contractual relations and downgrading of wage and other employment conditions.

Labour broking is tantamount to slavery, as it amounts to the trading of human beings as commodities. Generally, the main contract is between the labour broker and the "client" enterprise. This contract sets out the labour services to be supplied and the price at which these services are to be supplied. The actual suppliers of the labour are excluded from this process.

This undermines their right to negotiate wages and other conditions of employment. The argument that a ban on labour broking will make it harder to find jobs has no basis in reality. The only reason for the client to engage a labour broker is to gain surplus value with only the barest minimum necessary compensa-

tion for the reproducing the required labour power.

Cosatu is being criticised for actually speaking on behalf of the working class but nobody is criticising COPE and the DA for speaking on behalf of the capitalists and aspirant bourgeoisie because the media, anyway is owned by the capitalist class.

The reality is that even section 198 of the Labour Relations Act (LRA) regulates Temporary Employment Services (TES) with which Cosatu has no problem. But labour brokers are used to also supply labour services that are not temporary in nature. In many cases, the work is of an ongoing or indefinite nature with the contractual terms being represented as temporary. This has resulted in the phenomenon of the worker now referred to as a "permanent temp".

In such cases, repeated consecutive renewals of the labour broker contract are adequate to retain an experienced worker for years on a long-term basis without having to worry about obligations that employers ought to have.

Labour Brokers should be banned in the South Africa or government must amend section 198 of the Labour Relations Act to only allow Placement or Recruitment Agencies and Temporary Employment Services (in cases where work is intrinsically of a temporary or seasonal nature). ●

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*Cde Smabatha is SACP North West  
Provincial Secretary*

# In memory of S'khumbuzo Mhlongo

**R**ecently, a spate of service delivery protests took shape in our communities as frustration and desperation heightened.

This is not new; since the demonstrations in Harrismith (when the youth took to the streets to demand shelter, bread and water) these actions have spiralled from one township to another.

But there are other forms of frustration and desperation that many young people regard as their personal challenges, when in fact they have a social form. This has taken shape in the form of government institutions not being able to meet the demand for better services for individuals who visit these institutions.

The one example is of S'khumbuzo Mhlongo, a 22-year-old who decided to take his life because he could not afford a R400 bribe. This young boy, who was part of a family of three, and has left two sisters behind, fought so hard for an ID to enable him to get full-time employment so that he could provide support for his family; his voice would not have been heard, and unfortunately when it was, it was too late.

There are many young people all over the country who are faced with the same frustrations. On a daily basis, they knock in the doors of employers seeking for jobs, or at the doors of universities seeking for education, or at the doors of hospitals seeking better health care. All of these challenges manifest themselves in a social form and poses a challenge for the youth movement to mobilise these young people in an organisation that seeks to challenge our government to provide quality services for our people.

The rate at which young people regard suicide as the ultimate solution to their challenges is frightening. It is our responsibility to ensure that we instil in the consciousness of our youth that they have an option in organising and uniting against these struggles and challenges instead of dying whilst they are trying.

The other form of suicide includes the options that Mhlongo has expressed. This includes taking on the life of crime or prostitution solely because they cannot get a job and earn a salary. This section of our youth does not undertake crime as a hobby, and would not be scared by the ferocity of the speeches of

the Ministry and Commissioners of Police because they have no other option. They have taken the option of surviving through crime, and have concluded that they would rather die by the Section 49 bullet than staying at home and dying of hunger.

A lot of senior politicians have blamed the recent service delivery strikes on a third force. Others have blamed internal ANC and Alliance squabbles over the leadership positions in local government come 2011. However, the reality is that even in the presence of these factors, the poverty and misery of our people become the predominant feeder of the two opportunistic factors. Our people cannot and will not decide to collude with third force elements or corrupt politicians when their lives are better and service delivery is unquestionable.

S'khumbuzo Mhlongo therefore tells a tale of many South African youth, in the same way as Kabelo Thibedi did, that frustrations and desperation can push the youth to the limit of whether taking their lives or threatening to take others. The manner in which the service delivery actions have assumed violence shows only the degree of frustrations and desperation that our people are encountering on a daily basis. We have to do much more to act in unison to expose the factors that hinder service delivery and deprive our people the right to these services.

The launch of the Presidential Hotline on Monday is an example of genuine efforts to get government to speak to the people and understand the frustrations that they face. On its first day, the hotline has reportedly received more than 25 000 calls and could obviously not take

some of them. This shows that our people are hungry to speak and be listened to. It exposes the inability of public servants, government officials, parliamentarians, cabinet ministers, local councillors and all types of leaders to go all out to speak to and listen to what the people have to say.

The other story that both Thibedi and Mhlongo tells is that the community thread that linked all of us, neighbours, churchgoers, sport mates and all forms of social units is slowly breaking down. The community used to be a safe haven wherein all of the frustrations and desperations were equally shouldered. Even in the days of Apartheid, the only unit that everyone relied on was the community in order to ensure that no one goes hungry or sick without attention. Today, the moral fibre of capitalism has imbued into the community a sense of selfishness, and has eroded on the patriotism and solidarity that reigned in those days.

In those days both Thibedi and Mhlongo would have known that their community would have salvaged them from their sorrows, and that they could not have solely suffered from their frustrations and desperations. The terrible fact about both their story is that it is bound to repeat itself, maybe in another form and hopefully in a less tragic way. But it has to be stopped.

It is time for the YCL and the Progressive Youth Alliance to ensure that we mobilise our youth in a very organic and organizational way to deal with all of these challenges. Our youth needs to understand that the personal or individual struggles that they are engaged into can also take a social form, even though they may be different in content.

The first task is for the YCL at Durban North to socialise their labour and mobilise the community in and around Hillcrest to build the house for the Mhlongo family from the material donated. It can only be through such selfless actions that we can instill not only the ideals of communism, but the values of a community that cares. That's the Bottom-line, cos the YCL said so! ●

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*Cde Buti Manamela is National Secretary of the YCL*

**S'khumbuzo – like Kabelo Thibedi before him – tells a tale of South African youth pushed to the limit**



**SOCIALISM  
IN OUR  
LIFETIME!**

**Y-REDS**

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

# As soldiers, organising is our constitutional and RDP right!

*The 26 August march is being used as a scapegoat to deny the defenders of South Africa's constitution their rights, says Cde Bhekinkosi Mvovo*

By **BHEKINKOSI MVOVO**

The Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) of the African National Congress (ANC) has touched almost all sectors of our country.

The following extract was taken directly from section 5.6: The size, character and doctrines of the new defence force must be appropriate to a country engaged in a major programme of socio-economic reconstruction and development. The rights of soldiers must be clearly defined and protected.

Apart from the assertion for the soldiers rights from the RDP, the highest court in the land, the Constitutional Court, declared on 26 May 1999 that soldiers have rights as citizens in uniform. Taking into consideration the ethos of a defence in democracy, the highest Court in the land confirmed the rights of men and women in the armed forces to form and join trade unions.

The South African Security Forces Union (Sasfu) accepts and endorses the need for a professional and disciplined SA National Defence Force that is well equipped and resourced to discharge its constitutional and national functions. Sasfu also asserts the Constitutional Court ruling that soldiers have both civil and labour rights in an open, free and democratic South Africa.

We have always been calling for a decisive political intervention to solve the huge problems in the SANDF but the political and military commanders, instead of addressing problems, got involved in big tenders, using the state institutions to advance their capital accumulation.

The events of 26 August 2009, in which the soldiers took to the streets of Pretoria to Union Buildings, were the culmination of long outstanding fundamental structural and political problems within the defence system. In fact, without further indulging in this reality, every person who has commented on this issue agrees that soldiers have genuine grievances.

How did these grievances come to the fore? It was the military unions that got the nation talking and any interventions to address these problems, are a response to the union's initiative.

The move to ban military unions is not only legally flawed, but also tampers with the principles of the ANC on freedom, the organic link and continuation of the political program to the protection of the South African Constitution.

The triumph of the soldiers by the 1999 Constitutional Court judgment has always been undermined by the unreasonable labour regulations of the SANDF that have not clearly defined the rights of soldiers and military trade unions as stipulated in the RDP. It is for this reason that the post Polokwane ANC was a hope to the soldiers that it would address this problem.

Sasfu fought very hard to make sure that the former generals who have failed to transform the SANDF but got themselves filthy rich through the Defence industry, do not come back as Defence ministers. But these Generals cannot be further restricted from giving advice to the Minister of Defence & Military Veterans, especially when they occupy strategic senior positions in the ANC.

In the defence force there are labour

regulations which clearly establish the relationship between the Department of Defence and military unions.

Sasfu is not impressed with the formation of Military Service Commission that will lock the views and contribution of organised labour outside the process of bringing solutions to the problems that were identified by the same labour representative. Many commissions come and go in the defence force. In 1997, the British Military Advisory Training Team (BMATT) gave a report to the then Minister of Defence in which it highlighted that commanders were ignoring problems and that former members of Umkhonto weSizwe (MK) and Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA) were not receiving fair treatment. Yet the shooting of white officers by a black soldier at Tempe Military Base in 1999 happened, followed by a series of shootings that occurred in Phalaborwa, in the SA navy, in the air force college and in many others, all with junior black soldiers killing senior white officers. The Setai Commission of Inquiry highlighted the same problems identified by BMATT and yet the situation stays the same.

We know the problems in the SANDF and the findings and recommendations made by the Setai Commission. The new commission will not come with anything new, especially if military unions are excluded. The labour movement must assess the situation now and come up with a clear characterisation of who we are dealing with here. ●

*Cde Mvovo is Sasfu President and a member of the YCL National Committee*